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ABSTRACT

This volume of an annual collection presents eight essays relating to instruction in the basic communication course. The essays are: "The Basic Communication Course at U.S. Colleges and Universities: VI" (Sherwyn P. Morreale, Michael S. Hanna, Roy M. Berko, and James W. Gibson); "How Basic Course Directors Evaluate Teaching Assistants: Social Constructionism in BasicCourseLand" (Nancy L. Buerkel-Rothfuss); "Get Your Modem Runnin', Get Out on the I-Way: Encouraging Internet Investigations in the Basic Course" (Glen Williams and Joni M. Johnson-Jones); "Will the Dazzling Promise Blind Us?: Using Technology in the Beginning Public Speaking Course" (Mary Mino); "Communication Apprehension, Self-Efficacy, and Grades in the Basic Course: Correlations and Implications" (Karen Kangas Dwyer and Dennis A. Fus); "Branching Out to Meet the Needs of Our Students: A Model for Oral Communication Assessment and Curriculum Programs" (Patricia A. Gutspec, Kevin McPherson, and Julie H. Spiro); "Analyzing C-SPAN in the Basic Communication Course" (Jim Schnell); and "Commentary: An Idea for Restructuring the Basic Communication Course: A 'Time When Needed' Modular Approach" (Donald D. Yoder). (RS)

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Basic Communication Course Annual 11

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Lawrence W. Hugenberg
Editor

CS 510 310

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1999

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Lawrence W. Hugenberg

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Sherwyn P. Morreale, Michael S. Hanna, Roy M. Berko, and James W. Gibson

This is the sixth in a series of investigations of the basic communication course, begun in 1968 by members of the Undergraduate Speech Instruction Interest Group of the Speech Association of America. This study was replicated in 1974, 1980, 1985, and 1990. Each of these studies gathered and reported information on instructional practices and administrative issues in the basic course at two- and four-year colleges and universities. In this study, the survey instrument from 1990 was revised to reflect contemporary concerns and mailed to the National Communication Association mailing list of 1500 schools. Data were analyzed and presented from 292 responding schools covering institutional demographics and (1) general approach and orientation to the basic course, (2) pedagogy (which subsumes seven sub-categories), (3) enrollment description and dynamics, and (4) administrative concerns. Comparisons to past studies indicate the basic communication course is thriving and growing, but some of the same problems continue today that beset the course in the past.

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Mary Mino

Because proponents of technology promise that by using electronic media, such as computer and video technologies, students' communication skills will improve, many public speaking instructors are using or considering using various types of technology. However, the effectiveness of various technologies as vehicles for delivering communication skill instruction have yet to be examined extensively. Therefore, communication educators need to assess the value of technology as compared to conventional delivery systems and consider the challenges before incorporating technology into the beginning public speaking course. This essay presents an overview of some of the uses

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Patricia A. Cutspec, Kevin McPherson, and Julie H. Spiro

Two of the multiple primary tasks facing post-secondary institutions across the country are revisiting and revitalizing general education or core programs and developing appropriate techniques for assessing the value of these programs. Following years of development and refinement, Western Carolina University has created an oral communication general education

program that not only meets the needs of individual students, but also encouraged consistency across the curriculum emphasizing and assessing the skills learned in the basic course. We have answered the call for revisitation and reform regarding the best pedagogical and epistemological strategies for developing competent communicators, and our results have been positive. This article presents the development and implementation of this program.

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Donald D. Yoder

This commentary suggests a different way of structuring the basic communication course. Instead of trying to teach a variety of communication course, this commentary develops a modular approach to the basic course to be taught in smaller units and at times in a student's studies when the communication skills in the specific units are more relevant. A tentative schedule for the units is suggested.

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The Basic Communication Course At U.S. Colleges and Universities: VI

Sherwyn P. Morreale
Michael S. Hanna
Roy M. Berko
James W. Gibson

"Speech communication instruction is founded on the important and fundamental assumption — that instruction actually makes a difference. Instructors assume that through education and experience, communication skills can be improved and knowledge can be enhanced" (Rubin & Graham, 1988). With this assumption in mind, speech communication professionals have attempted to include in the collegiate curriculum a basic communication course. That course allows students the opportunity to gain, to some degree, the communication knowledge and skills perceived essential for obtaining employment, career success, and effective participation in a democratic society (Kramer & Hinton, 1996).

"Over the last three decades, the basic course has generally followed one of two main formats, either a public speaking course which emphasizes the creation and development of public presentations, or a hybrid course which combines intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, and public communication" (Kramer and Hinton, 1996). Both the public speaking and the hybrid appear to accomplish the goal of improving various dimensions of students' communication competence. "Recent studies have shown that students' perceptions of their commu-

nication competencies generally improve after taking a basic hybrid course" (Ford and Wolvin, 1992). Other results indicate that students' perceptions of their competencies changed significantly in class, work, and social contexts, after completing a basic public speaking course (Ford and Wolvin, 1993). In two other studies, a significant reduction in students' communication apprehension and an increase in self-esteem resulted from a public speaking course (Morreale, Hackman, & Neer, 1995); and an increase in willingness to communicate and in self-esteem resulted from an interpersonal communication class (Morreale, Hackman, & Neer, 1998).

In light of such reports of success, a need exists to answer questions about the basic course, its objectives, course content, instructional and testing methods, enrollment, staffing and institutional support. To discover answers to such questions a longitudinal study of the basic communication course was undertaken in 1968. This is the sixth report in the descriptive series.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This formal investigation of the basic course began in 1968 with a study conducted by members of the Undergraduate Speech Instruction Interest Group of the Speech Association of American. At the time of the initial study, it was determined that subsequent studies should be conducted approximately every five years. The purpose was to keep the information current, as such data are valuable to basic course directors, department faculty, and administrators at the departmental and college levels. Moreover, as the field changes, so too, might the basic course. The study was replicated in 1974, 1980, 1985, and 1990 (Gibson, Gruner, Hanna, Smythe, & Hayes, 1980; Gibson, Hanna, & Huddleston,

1990; Gibson, Hanna, & Leichty, 1985; Gibson, Kline, & Gruner, 1974; Gibson, Gruner, Brooks, & Petri, 1970). Each of these studies gathered information using a national survey and reported demographic findings and pedagogical practices in the basic communication course (Newburger,1994).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study, conducted in 1996, was to examine again the nature of the basic communication course as taught at two- and four-year colleges and universities, and to compare the findings to those of the past studies. Additionally, the current researchers were interested in examining pedagogical issues that have emerged since the study was last conducted in 1988. As in past studies, information was sought on factors such as course objectives, course content, instructional and testing methods, enrollment, staffing, and institutional support. The present study also examined contemporary issues such as assessment practices, the role of communication across the curriculum, and the use of technology in the basic course.

DEFINITION OF THE BASIC COURSE

In the present study, the basic course was defined as "that communication course either required or recommended for a significant number of undergraduates; that course which the department has, or would recommend as a requirement for all or most undergraduates." Given this definition, the course may focus on one subject, or some combination of communication contexts or levels, such as the hybrid course. The hybrid model

might address two or more topical areas such as interpersonal communication, public speaking, or small group communication. The basic course may take primarily a theoretical or primarily a performance approach, or a combination thereof. It is a course that is intended to introduce students to the discipline's content or the fundamentals of communication.

Method

The present study made every effort to replicate the method used in the past studies in the series. Survey development, sampling frame, and data gathering and analyses were kept as similar as possible in order to argue for the longitudinal value of the present data.

Instrumentation

As with past studies, the present work based its survey instrument on the tool used in the last study in 1988. First, some items deemed no longer of interest were eliminated, while others were revised or reworded. Then new items were added to address questions of timely interest such as technology, communication laboratories, and communication across-the-curriculum programs. The resultant survey was submitted to the chairs of the basic course units of the National Communication Association (NCA), regional associations, and NCA's Research Board. Recommendations from those groups for improving the survey were implemented, and then the instrument was pilot-tested on four campuses. The results of the pilot tests suggested the survey was too long, so some redundant items were eliminated. The final form of the questionnaire consisted of 97 items, 93 of which could be answered using categorical responses.

SAMPLING PROCESS

The surveys were mailed in 1996 to the entire NCA mailing list of 1500 schools and colleges that have a communication program/department. That mailing list includes junior and community colleges, as well as four-year colleges and universities in the United States. The same sampling process was used in past studies. In 1990, surveys were mailed to 1532 schools on the SCA (now NCA) list. In replication of the past studies, no effort was made to recontact those schools that did not answer the initial mailing. A total of 292 schools responded to the survey, a response rate of 19.6%. The response rate in 1985 and 1990 was 28%.

Although a higher return rate would have been desirable, the number of responses is sufficient to argue that the findings of this study are representative of the status of the basic course in US colleges and universities. Reinard (1994, p. 218) states that for proportional data from a population of known size and no estimate of population variability, with an N of 1000, a sample size of 278 is sufficiently representative. With an N of 5000, a sample size of 357 would be representative. Calculations suggest an N of 1500 (the number of questionnaires mailed out) would require responses and a sample size of 288 in order to have confidence in the data at the 95 percent level. Thus the 292 returned questionnaires constitute a reasonable sampling frame.

RESULTS

Respondents' Demographic Data

Respondents were asked to describe their institution size, affiliation and kind. Data in the current study sug-

gest responses from a diversity of school sizes and kinds. Table 1 displays the various sizes of responding institutions' student populations.

Table 1
Size of Student Body of Responding Schools

Size	*Frequency*	*Percent of respondents*
Below 1000	27	9.4
1000-4999	98	34.3
5000-9999	49	17.1
10,000-19,999	61	21.3
20,000 and above	51	17.8

Table 2 displays the types of schools by sources of support and affiliation. Table 3 shows the type of institution by kind.

Table 2
Type of Institution by Support and/or Affiliation

Type	*Frequency*	*Percent of respondents*
Church supported/affiliated	66	22.8
Private secular	30	10.4
State supported	185	64.0
Other	8	2.8

Table 3
Type of Institution by Kind

Type	*Frequency*	*Percent of Respondents*
Community or junior college	67	23.0
Four-year college	73	25.1
University	145	49.8
Other	8	2.8

Responding institutions overwhelmingly use the semester system. Indeed, 85.7% of respondent schools are on a semester system. Only 13.2% of respondent institutions are on a quarter system, and only one percent are on a trimester system.

Table 4
Schools, Departments, Divisions and Colleges
Offering a Basic Communication Course
(Ordered by frequency of mention from least to most)

Area	*Frequency*
Agriculture	5
Home Economics	6
Nursing	11
Journalism	12
Education	13
Business	19
Arts and Science	39
Other	67

In past studies, some departments reported competition from other academic units in the college or university to teach the basic course. That competition created enrollment problems for the communication department's course. The present study inquired whether such a problem still exists, and if so, to what extent. Table 4 shows respondents answers about which schools, departments, divisions, or colleges, other than the communication department, offer a basic communication course.

Only 2.5% of respondents reported they have a "Communication Across the Curriculum" program that may be substituted for their department's basic course; 97.5% of respondents don't have such a program.

Respondents' Categorical Data

The survey results that follow are organized around four descriptive categories suggested by the questionnaire items: (1) General Approach and Orientation to the Basic Course (2) Pedagogy (which subsumes seven sub-categories), (3) Enrollment Description and Dynamics, and (4) Administrative Concerns. Administrative concerns include issues such as who teaches the course, how they are trained, consistency across sections of the course, and quality among sections.

General Approach and Orientation To the Basic Course

As in earlier studies, the researchers were interested in describing the current status of the basic course, but also tracing trends in the direction the basic course might be taking. Is there, for example, a pendulum

swing between a primary emphasis on public speaking and a more "hybrid" course that presents interpersonal, small group, and perhaps some other context, as well as public speaking?

Current data show that public speaking remains the dominant approach to the basic course. Fifty-five percent (55%) of respondents reported that their course is a public speaking course; 30.1% equally emphasize interpersonal, small group, and public speaking contexts; and, 4.2% take a theoretical approach with no special emphasis given to a specific context or set of variables. Only 1% reported a course exclusively about the interpersonal context, and only 0.7% reported a basic course exclusively about small group communication.

When respondents to the present study were asked what the approach/philosophy of the basic course at their institutions was five years ago, 63% named a public speaking context, 30.7% equally emphasized interpersonal, small group, and public speaking contexts, 4.4% theoretical approach, and 1.5% interpersonal context. If respondents' recollections are correct, there exists a subtle trend away from public speaking, but the data do not suggest any magnitude to this trend. Table 5 shows the comparison of this and earlier surveys regarding approach and orientation. Since 1980, the public speaking course has held its own as the most popular basic course. The hybrid course places second but shows more variability in terms of what one might call market share. The other orientations pale by comparison to public speaking and the hybrid approach.

Table 5
Percent of Schools Reporting Approach/Orientation
to the Basic Course
Type of Course/Orientation

	1968	1974	1980	1984	1988	1996
Public Speak	54.5	21.3	51.3	54.0	56.0	55.0
Fundamentals	21.3	12.8				
Hybrid Combine	13.2	39.4	40.3	34.0	25.0	30.1
Theory			2.5	4.0	4.0	4.2
Interpersonal			4.7	6.0	4.0	1.0
Other	2.2	1.3	.5	2.0	9.0	.7 (Group)

Pedagogy

The general approach and orientation taken toward the basic course leads, naturally, to questions about the pedagogy employed. How do instructors balance theory and performance aspects of the course? How do they deliver the course content? What materials do they use, and how, if at all, do they supplement these materials? What do they ask students to do—the number and kinds of performances, for example—and how do they measure the students' successes in doing these things? The present study pursued all of these questions. Responses regarding pedagogy are arranged in eight categories: (1) Balance of Theory and Performance, (2) Delivery Systems, (3) Number and Evaluation of Performance Assignments, (4) Student Exemption from the Course, (5) Topics Presented in the Basic Course, (6) Textbooks Used, (7) Interactive Multimedia (8) and Innovations.

Balance of Theory and Performance. One obvious question about how the course is taught concerns the balance in time and energy between theory and performance, that is cognitive learning and skills training. The respondents indicated a balanced ratio between "theory" and "performance" (see Table 6).

Table 6
Ratio of Theory to Performance in Basic Course

Theory/Performance	Percent
20%-80%	9.2
30%-70%	24.4
40%-60%	23.7
50%-50%	23.3
60%-40% or greater	19.4

Delivery Systems. It appears the basic course is presented in a traditional lecture format at most of the reporting colleges and universities. The once common "lecture-laboratory" delivery system, in which a professor of record delivers a mass lecture, and students break into small laboratory sections to practice performance skills, appears largely to have disappeared from communication departments. Indeed, only 13.2% of all respondents reported using the mass lecture/small performance laboratory system. Now, instead, a single teacher of record takes full responsibility for what goes on in the classroom.

Few responding schools rely upon videotaped or televised lectures as a means of reaching large numbers of students. Indeed, 90.5% of respondents do not present any lectures on videotape. Of those who do use televi-

sion as a delivery system, television doesn't figure heavily in the course. Fewer than one percent of respondents present more than 25% of course lectures via videotape. Similarly, over 97% of respondents report they do not broadcast course materials over the airways or through an on-campus cable system. Of those respondents who report broadcasting course lectures, most do not broadcast as much as 25% of the course lectures.

Technology and other forms of teaching tools are used in the basic course to supplement course instruction. When asked whether students perform assignments which are videotaped and played back to them, 42% answered no, 47% reported one to three of such assignments, 10.3% four to six, and 0.7% seven to nine assignments. Table 7 displays usage patterns for technology and other resources that supplement teaching in the basic course.

Table 7
Technology and Other Resources Used to Supplement Instruction in the Basic Course

Form of Technology / Resource	*Frequency of Mention*
Teacher-Made Handouts	273
Videotape	269
Slides and Transparencies	191
Film	130
Audiotape	85
Computer-based Materials Storied in Electronic Media	78
Models	74
On-line Computer Applications (email, www, etc.)	69
Other	23

Number and Evaluation of Performance Assignments. The basic course remains a skills-based course to a great extent. Nearly three quarters of all respondents (71.5%) require their students to present four to six oral performance assignments. Only 4.2% of respondents do not require any performance assignments. Fifteen percent require one to three performance assignments, 8.5% require from seven to ten performances, and 0.7% ask for more than ten.

Most students perform before the same audience group (93.2%) each time they present. Almost 93% of responding institutions have only one instructor involved in evaluating student speeches. In regard to the process of providing feedback to students about their performances, 58.4% rely on teacher feedback alone; 41.2% report they use a combination of teacher and peer evaluation to provide feedback to their students, and 0.4% report they rely entirely on peer evaluation. Approximately eighteen percent (18.4%) of respondents report they do not provide oral evaluations of student performance. Oral evaluations are given after each performance in 42.2% of responding institutions. About sixteen percent (16.2%) of respondents said they wait to give oral evaluations until after several performances are presented, and 11.9% of respondents reported they wait until after all performances in one assignment are completed, before they provide oral evaluation.

Investigators wanted to know the weight assigned to oral performance activities as compared to written activities. Table 8 displays the responses to the question about those comparative weights. Respondents also were asked if students are provided written criticism of their performance work. About ninety percent (90.6%) responded that they always give written criticism, 7.2% give written criticism sometimes, and 2.2% never give it.

Table 8
Weights Given to Oral vs. Written Activities

Ratio	Percent
100/0	2.5
80/20	22.3
60/40	42.8
50/50	20.5
40/60 or less	11.9

Student Exemption from the Course. Because of life experience or unusual talent, some students might think they do not need to complete a basic communication course. In cases where a course is required, such students may wish to apply for exemption from the requirement. Respondents were asked if this were possible, and if so, how was the exemption process carried out.

More than half of the respondents (58.8%) reported students cannot be exempted from the course. Less than one percent of respondents (0.7%) said that students can be exempted by written exam. About 5.3% allow exemption from the course by successful oral performance. Nearly a quarter (23.6%) of respondents require both written exam and oral performance of a student who seeks exemption. Only 3.2% of respondents allow exemption on the basis of life experience, and 8.5% by some other means.

In 43.3% of cases, students who "test" out of the course get credit for the course, but in 56.7% they do not. In 11.5% of the cases, students who "test out" of the course must take another speech communication course

in its place, but in 88.5% of responding institutions, once a student has been excused from the basic course, liability for basic communication coursework ends.

Topics Presented in the Basic Course. The question of what topics receive most attention in the basic course was probed in the current survey, as it was in the past studies. Respondents were asked to mark the ten topics that receive the greatest amount of time in the course, from a list of 30. Table 9 displays the top 13 responses in rank order by frequency of mention.

A comparison of the rankings of topics now covered in the course, to the rankings from the 1990 study,

Table 9
Topics that Receive the Greatest Amount of Time in the Basic Course in 1996

Topic	*Frequency*	*Percent*
1. informative speaking	248	84.9
2. persuasive speaking	240	82.2
3. audience analysis	206	70.5
4. delivery	200	68.5
5. outlining	173	59.2
6. listening	171	58.6
6. supporting material	171	58.6
7. speech anxiety	141	48.3
8. reasoning	127	43.5
9. nonverbal communication	117	40.0
10. interpersonal communication	112	38.4
11. communication theory	109	37.3
12. critical thinking	108	37.0
13. language	100	34.2

shows how the top-ranked 13 topics compare (see Table 10). With the exception of the two top-ranked topics, informative and persuasive speaking, there is considerable change in the amount of time devoted to various topics. Audience analysis, supporting material, and speech anxiety, for example, demonstrate considerable increase in the amount of attention they receive in the course.

Table 10
1990-1996 Comparison of Topics Covered in the Basic Course (Percentage of schools indicating the topic is covered in their basic course)

Topic	*1990 Percent*	*1996 Percent*
1. informative speaking	81	84.9
2, persuasive speaking	78	82.2
3. audience analysis	30	70.5
4. delivery	59	68.5
5. outlining	30	59.2
6. listening	not mentioned	58.6
6. supporting material	26	58.6
7. speech anxiety	18	48.3
8. reasoning	32	43.5
9. nonverbal communication	not mentioned	40.0
10. interpersonal communication	39	38.4
11. communication theory	44	37.3
12. critical thinking	not mentioned	37.0
13. language	15	34.2

Textbooks Used. Textbooks and other ancillary materials required of students also provide insight into what instructors are addressing in their courses. Every iteration of the basic course survey has asked respondents to name the textbooks they require, and to list other ancillary materials they use to deliver their courses. Respondents in the present study named over 100 textbook titles. Table 11 lists the most frequently mentioned textbooks, ordered by the number of times the book was mentioned. The books listed represent various approaches to the basic course (public speaking, interpersonal, hybrid, etc.), since survey respondents were reporting about the book used in their particular course.

Table 11
Most Frequently Used Textbooks in the Basic Course
by Frequency of Mention

Lucas, S.E. (1992) *The Art of Public Speaking* (5th ed.). NY: Random House. (52 Mentions)
Osborn, M. and Osborn, S. (1994). *Public Speaking*. NY: Boston: Houghton Mifflin. (20 Mentions)
Gronbeck, B., et. al. (1994). *Principles of Speech Communication*. NY: Longman. (11 Mentions)
Gamble and Gamble, (1993). *Communication Works*. NY: McGraw-Hill. (10 Mentions)
Pearson, J. and Nelson, P. (1997). *Understanding and Sharing*. Dubuque, IA: Wm.C. Brown. (10 Mentions)
Adler, R. and Rodman, G. (1991). *Understanding Human Communication*. NY: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston. (9 Mentions)
Zarefsky, D. (1996). *Public Speaking: Strategies for Suc-*

cess. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon. (9 Mentions)

Beebe, S. and Beebe, S. (1997). *Public Speaking, An Audience-Centered Approach.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Brown. (8 Mentions)

Devito, J. (1993). *Essentials of Human Communication.* NY: HarperCollins.(8 Mentions)

Gregory, H. (1993). *Public Speaking for College and Career.* NY: McGraw-Hill. (8 Mentions)

Grice, G. and Skinner, J. (1995). *Mastering Public Speaking.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon. (8 Mentions)

Devito, J. (1994). *Human Communication: The Basic Course.* NY: HarperCollins. (7 Mentions)

Jaffe, C. (1998). *Public Speaking: Concepts and Skills for a Diverse Society* (2nd edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. (7 Mentions)

Verderber, R. (1996). *Communicate!* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. (7 Mentions)

Zeuschner, R. (1997). *Communicating Today.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon. (7 mentions)

Nelson P. and Pearson, J. (1996). *Confidence in Public Speaking.* Madison, WI: Brown and Benchmark. (5 mentions)

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Interactive Multimedia. Respondents answered three open-ended questions that investigated the role of interactive multimedia (IMM) as supplemental support

for the basic course. The goal of these questions was to gain some qualitative insight into this aspect of the basic course, in addition to the quantitative focus of the majority of the questions on the survey.

There were only 11 responses to the first question, which asked if departments develop or produce their own interactive multimedia of their own for use in their basic courses. The number of non-respondents to this question is significant. Apparently out of a total of 292 responding schools, only 11 had an interest in discussing the topic of developing and producing IMM materials. Those 11 respondents indicated that the course processes or subject matter, of interest for IMM applications, included: basic course information, scheduling and testing, public speaking, listening, group and intercultural communication, language, and listening.

The second question about interactive multimedia asked respondents to name the course subject matter for which they use outsourced IMM, if any. Ten respondents answered this question, indicating that they use IMM to assist in the following subject areas: speeches (on videotape), speech preparation (videodisk and player), public speaking skills (self-instruction modules), speech outlining and delivery, intercultural/co-cultural/interpersonal (negotiating and bargaining), and research skills.

Respondents also were asked to recommend one or more titles of available interactive multimedia for use by others. Again, ten respondents answered the question. Only six specific recommendations were offered, and not one of the six was offered by more than one respondent.

Innovations. Respondents were asked to describe any innovations they have incorporated in their courses. One hundred twenty-seven (127) respondents answered

this question. Most respondents listed more than one innovation being used in their course. Examination of the responses suggests that the innovations distribute into five categories: (1) Uses of Technology, (2) Uses of Student Assignments and Activities, (3) Conceptual Innovations, (4) Uses of Human Teaching Resources and (5) Other. The technology category subdivides into the use of video or computer technology. Video use primarily involved public speaking instruction, for example, videotaping student speeches and using tapes of speeches for pedagogical purposes. Computer technology involved a broader spectrum of uses such as, but not limited to: interactive (smart) classrooms, computer-equipped practice labs, computer-based tutorial packages, CD-ROMs and the Internet for research activities, e-mail listservs, and home pages for the course.

Enrollment Description and Dynamics

The basic communication course appears to be a stable component in the undergraduate curriculum. Survey data suggest the course is popular among students, with enrollments holding steady or increasing, relative to other departmental and college offerings.

In terms of enrollment dynamics, 55.1% of respondents said their enrollments are holding steady, 39% said enrollments are increasing, and six percent reported enrollments are decreasing. Further, 48% of respondents characterized overall enrollments in other areas of their departments as holding steady, 42.3% increasing, and 9.6% decreasing. In terms of the growth rate of the basic course, 65.3% indicated that it is about the same as that of their institution; 28.5% said that it is greater, and 6.2% said that it is less than that of their

institution. Tables 11 and 12 display changes in enrollments among responding institutions.

Table 11
Dynamics of Increasing Enrollment
Where Enrollment is Increasing

How much	Frequency	Percent
Less than 5%	71	33.2
5-10%	62	29.0
10-15%	33	15.4
15-20%	19	8.9
over 20%	29	13.6

Table 12
Dynamics of Decreasing Enrollment
Where Enrollment is Decreasing

How much	Frequency	Percent
Less than 5%	39	53.4
5-10%	22	30.1
10-15%	6	8.2
15-20%	1	1.4
over 20%	5	6.8

Enrollment dynamics also includes issues of class size and numbers of students enrolled per section. Most departments strive to keep class sizes small. Only 7.3% enroll over 30 students per section; nearly six percent limit enrollments to 13 to 17 students; and 0.3% report enrollments per section below 12 students. Most respondents (46.5%) reported enrollments of 23 to 30 stu-

dents per section. Nearly as many (39.9%) enroll from 18 to 22 students in a section. Some 30% of responding institutions offer over 20 sections of the course each academic term. Twenty-five percent offer five or fewer sections. Twenty-four percent offer from six to ten sections, and 20.8% offer 11-15 sections.

The majority of responding institutions give three credit hours for the course (84.3%). Far fewer (6.8%) give four hours. A smattering (3.9%) of institutions offer five hours of credit. About four percent offer two hours, and less than one percent of respondents offer just one hour of credit. Three percent of the respondents give credit in a different way from academic hours.

Administrative Concerns

Administration of the basic communication course may involve coordinating the efforts of a multiplicity of faculty members who teach multiple sections of the course. Who teaches the basic course and how are they trained? Is the basic course in communication offered in competition with similar courses taught in other disciplines? And how is this activity paid for? Much of a course administrator's time and energy is devoted to assuring that every student has a classroom with a teacher and that those teachers are scheduled appropriately. The administrator may be concerned with questions of quality control, similarity and consistency among sections, and course evaluation. These and other administrative concerns received attention in the present study.

Who Teaches the Course? Respondents were asked to indicate the staffing patterns of their basic course. Specifically, they were asked to indicate who

does the majority of teaching in the basic course, by estimating percentages of the teaching load carried by graduate assistants, instructors, assistant professors, associate professors, professors, and others (e.g., adjuncts). Table 13 provides an overview of staffing patterns, displaying the data by frequency of mention, not by relative percentages. Teaching in the basic course is broadly distributed among the ranks of teaching faculty. Instructors, assistant professors, and associate professors do most of the teaching, but it also appears that full professors carry a share of the teaching load.

Table 13
Staffing Patterns in the Basic Course by Frequency of Mention (least to most in order of teaching load)

Adjunct Faculty	57
Teaching Assistants	78
Full Professors	125
Associate Professors	133
Assistant Professors	154
Instructors	168

Quality Control. Issues of quality control in the basic course may relate to who the teacher is but also to the quantity and quality of training provided for the position. In a large, multi-section course, quality control also may involve standardization across sections, program evaluation procedures, and assessment of outcomes.

Training of Faculty. The quality of training provided to faculty and instructors impacts the quality of the basic course. Some faculty are more experienced, while others are relatively new to the job. In connection

with an interest in quality control in the basic course, respondents were asked how their graduate teaching assistants and adjunct faculty are trained and prepared to teach.

Train them through regularly scheduled discussion sessions with a course director; 26.7% provide both regularly scheduled discussion sessions and formal course work for credit; 10.5% provide training through formal course work only. Seven percent provide no instruction or training at all. When institutions give credit hours for graduate assistant training, 40.5% give three hours, 16.7% offer one, 9.5% give two, and 7.1% give four. More than a quarter of respondents (26.2%) marked the category other.

If institutions use adjunct teachers, 37.9% do not train them at all; 35% train them through regularly scheduled discussion sessions with a course director; 1.5% through formal course work for credit; 1% through a combination of scheduled discussions and formal course work; and 24.8% train in other ways.

Standardization. Given the premise that more than one section of a course is available, students must be confident that, no matter the section or instructor, they will get essentially the same course of instruction. Respondents were asked to describe how much standardization exists in their basic course. They were asked to choose from among six possible descriptions ranging from "Everyone teaches from the same syllabus using the same textbook," through "Our teachers have great autonomy in selecting materials and designing instruction."

In response to this question, about standardization in the basic course, 24.1% said everyone teaches from the same syllabus using the same textbook; 17.7% said everyone attempts to meet the same learning objectives,

using the same textbook and the same performance assignments; 33.7% said that everyone attempts to meet the same learning objectives, using the same textbook, but may develop whatever teaching strategies they wish to meet them; 12.8% said everyone attempts to meet the same learning objectives but may choose from more than one selected textbook and may develop whatever teaching strategies they wish; and, 9.2% said that their teachers have great autonomy in selecting materials and designing instruction. Only 2.5% reported other or anything else. Given these responses, it appears that most departments are attempting some kind of standardization across multiple sections of the basic course.

Program Evaluation Procedures. Respondents were asked to describe how they measure the quality of instruction. Most respondents rely on student feedback gathered in survey form. Many collect student feedback about the course from evaluation forms that are administered campuswide and are also used in other departments. Table 14 displays the ways that quality of instruction is evaluated.

A related question concerned the frequency with which evaluations occur. How often, and when, do departments evaluate the quality of instruction in the basic course? If an institution collects feedback from students in survey form, 74.4% do so every term in every section, 12% once every year in every section, and 13.7% do so in some other fashion. Seventeen percent (17.3%) of institutions evaluate different faculty ranks in different ways, but 82.7% apply the same standards and methods regardless of faculty rank.

Table 14
How Respondents Measure Quality
by Frequency of Mention

Measure	Frequency	Percent
Feedback from students in survey form	218	74.5
College-wide form used in other departments as well	150	51.4
In-class observations by chairperson or peers	138	47.3
Departmental form used in other classes as well	65	22.3
University-wide form used in other colleges as well	57	19.5
Other	22	7.5
The matter of assessing the quality of instruction is left up to the teachers	13	4.5
Evaluation of only non-tenured teachers	11	3.8
No measure of the quality of instruction	3	1.0

Assessment of Outcomes in the Course. Another important part of quality control relates to assessing the outcomes of instruction. Respondents were asked how this task is accomplished. Respondents indicated that they use both teacher-constructed and oral performance competency assessment tests. Table 15 displays rank-ordered responses to this question.

Table 15
How Respondents Assess Outcomes of Instruction
by Frequency of Mention

We use individual, teacher-made tests.	174
We use classroom oral performance competency assessments.	116
We use a departmental oral performance competency assessment.	36
We use course-wide, teaching group-produced tests.	35
Other	34
We don't attempt to assess outcomes of our instruction	33
We secure feedback from other departments who require students to take the course.	29

Financial Considerations and Administrative Support. In past studies, the basic course has been described as representing an important contribution to the financial base of the communication department. In the present survey, respondents were asked about this administrative consideration. In response, 44.2% said the financial base of their department does not rest primarily on the basic course; 27.7% said it does rest on the basic course to a moderate degree; and 28.1% indicated that the financial base of the department rests on the basic course, to a large degree. Table 16 illustrates what percentages of the department's total student credit hours are generated by the department's basic course.

Respondents were asked to estimate the degree of administrative support provided to the basic communication course. Just fewer than a quarter of respondents (22%) reported their courses enjoy a very great degree of

Table 16
Percent of overall Department Student Credit Hours Generated by the Basic Course

Percentage	Frequency
1-10%	31
11-25%	48
26-40%	67
41-60%	60
over 60%	54

administrative support; 20.8% said they enjoy a considerable degree of administrative support; 44% called their administrative support adequate; and 20% called it poor. About seven percent (6.7%) thought administrative support for their course was "disgraceful." When asked if the situation were changing, 66% of respondents said that the level of administrative support has remained the same during the past five years. Twenty-two percent (22.7%) reported an increase in administrative support for their courses, and 11.3% said administrative support had decreased.

Administrative Challenges. In past studies, basic course directors and other respondents reported a variety of frustrations and problems associated with teaching or supervising teachers of the basic course. In the present study, all but four respondents provided some response, when asked to name the three top problems associated with the basic course, in order of importance. The contemporary responses appear similar to the problems reported in past studies. Similarity of experiences among present respondents suggests the following categories for their frustrations and problems:

(1) maintaining consistency in quality, substance, performance and testing standards, from section to section in multi-section courses; (2) finding, training, and maintaining faculty to teach the multiple sections; (3) fighting faculty burn-out from teaching the same thing repeatedly; and (4) maintaining appropriate class size. The use of part-time and adjunct faculty was repeatedly cited as a factor either related to or that exacerbates all the other problems and frustrations inherent in the basic course.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the nature of the basic communication course, as taught at two- and four-year colleges and universities. A total of 292 schools responded to the mailed-out survey. This sample size is sufficient to discuss the survey results as representative of the 1532 schools identified by NCA as having a communication program/department (Reinard, 1994). However, it should be noted that the sample size has become smaller each time this study has been conducted, which is increasingly problematic in terms of discussing the results.

That caveat aside, responses received did indicate that the basic communication course continues to thrive and grow at the same rate or a rate greater than the growth of the parent institution and the communication department. Few departments reported decreases in the size of their basic course. This accelerated rate of growth for the basic course bodes well for the discipline, as long as section size does not become problematic for those teaching and those learning, the students.

The basic communication course follows one of two formats: a public speaking course (55% of those re-

sponding offer this course) or a hybrid course (30.1%) which combines intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, and public speaking. The public speaking format has experienced a one per cent decrease since the last survey in 1988. The hybrid course has experienced a five per cent increase since 1988. Trends in orientation since the survey began in 1968 are interesting. The public speaking course was the number one orientation five out the six times that the survey has been conducted. Only in 1974, did the hybrid course (39.4%) outpace public speaking (21.3). That one-time variation may have resulted from a tendency for an approach to be "in" or "trendy" for a short period of time.

No matter the type of offering, the basic course appears to incorporate a balance of theory and performance. This result dispels any concerns that the course may be too skills-based at many schools. Only 9.2% of respondents indicated that 80% or more of their course involves performance, with 20% or less involving theory. The courses tend to be taught in a traditional lecture format, with the lecture-laboratory approach dropping in popularity as a delivery method. Challenges associated with presenting large lectures and relating the lectures to laboratory sessions may account for the decline in use of this method.

Nearly three-quarters of the respondents indicated that when performances are included, four to six oral presentations are required of students. These presentations tend to be given to the same audience. The number of presentations per student is commendable. Unless a confounding factor such as high communication anxiety is present, more speeches will likely result in more growth in public speaking ability. Presenting to the same audience is customary and almost inherent in the basic course structure. However, teachers of the

course might want to look toward varying the audience to replicate real-life situations.

Most schools (58.8%) do not allow students to be exempted from the course, which is a good thing when one looks at what is covered in the course. Topics that receive major attention (over 50% affirmative answers) in the basic course are: informative speaking, persuasive speaking, audience analysis, delivery, outlining, listening, and supporting material. Obviously this topic list relates mostly to the public speaking orientation, since 55% of respondents reported using that orientation. In light of recent criticisms of higher education in the mass media, changes since the 1990 survey in the percentage of schools that cover certain topics is almost surprising. For example, the topic of audience analysis increased from 30% to 70.5%; outlining from 30% to 59.2%; supporting materials from 26% to 58.6%; and speech anxiety from 18% to 48.3%. Such changes suggest that substantive issues related to speech preparation and how the student feels about speaking are increasingly of concern.

A variety of textbooks are used in the course but reports of the use of interactive multimedia are limited. Interestingly, textbook authors and publishers for the basic course are developing ancillary materials using new media such as CD-ROMs to accompany their books, despite the fact that survey respondents indicate they don't use such media to any great extent.

Respondents did identify other innovations they are incorporating in their courses. The use of technology continues to mean videotapes of speeches for evaluative and pedagogical purposes. Additionally, a variety of uses of the Internet were reported. But when asked to report any innovations they are using, respondents mentioned people as much as technology. Student assignments and activities, human teaching resources,

and conceptual innovations were frequently mentioned in various forms.

Most respondents (46.5%) indicated that class size is 23 to 30 students per section, with class sizes of 18 to 22 also common (39.9%). When asked to report challenges and problems, maintaining an appropriate class size was mentioned as a concern. The courses tend to be taught by all levels of faculty, with instructors, assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors outnumber teaching assistants and adjunct faculty. Where teaching assistants and graduate assistants are used, the majority of schools provide some form of training to prepare for the instructional position. However, acquiring and training the right faculty was reported as a challenge to those administrating the course.

Some degree of standardization and uniformity across sections of the course is attempted at most institutions, as indicated by required textbook selections, common learning objectives, and common course syllabi. Like class size and training issues, consistency across multiple sections was identified as an area of administrative concern.

The major source for course evaluations is the use of feedback from students in survey form (74.5%). The most common type of assessment of course outcomes in the use of individual, teacher-constructed tests, though assessment of classroom oral performance competency is also used to assess outcomes. These approaches might categorically be referred to as more traditional methods of assessment, that is course evaluations, student test scores, and evaluating in-class performance. Considering the increased emphasis by state and regional accreditation agencies on the use of alternative and multiple methods for assessing oral competence, the domi-

nance of traditional methods in the basic course is surprising.

In summary, challenges in administrating the course remain much the same since 1990: maintaining optimal class size, instructional staffing, faculty burnout, and issues of quality across multiple sections.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Earlier investigations of the basic course were praised and criticized. Praise aside, some of the criticism related to sampling procedures, with recommendations to increase sample size. Other critics called for a survey instrument that probed the nature of the basic course in greater depth and asked more questions. These two points of criticism tended to work against each other. Including more questions lengthened the survey and resulted in fewer surveys being returned and a smaller sample. As a result, the sampling issue was not resolved sufficiently in the present study. Future replications of the study might consider varying the sampling method considerably. Techniques might include phone sampling, on-site sampling at regional and national conventions, and sending a warning letter ahead of the survey mailing.

Another recommendation for future replication relates to course orientation. It may be advisable to gather data separately within the survey, depending on whether the respondent's course is public speaking or the hybrid orientation. These two approaches taken together represent 85.1% of responding programs in the present study. It might be more useful to gather and report data for each orientation separately for some items contained on the survey.

One other recommendation for the present study related to issues of diversity. It was suggested that diversity, as a variable, be included in this study. The developers of the present survey supported that recommendation but realized that addressing diversity would have extended the survey instrument to well over 100 items. Issues related to diversity in the basic course are complex and therefore deserving of appropriate attention. The authors of the present study support the need for another survey that will investigate those issues from a variety of perspectives. Such a survey could examine, but not be limited to, diversity in hiring and teaching staff, course content, classroom strategies, and student demographics.

There are other aspects of the basic course that could be examined in the next iteration of this survey. For example, the role of the basic course in general education is of much interest. Another question to ask might relate to who our students are and why they choose to take our course, if indeed they are given a choice. Some questions already asked in the present survey could be expanded in the next iteration or developed as a separate study. The challenges to administrating the course, reported in this study, deserve more examination. That examination could consider how the challenges are being efficaciously addressed on our campuses. Technology in the basic course is a timely topic that has been separately addressed already at basic course conferences and elsewhere.

For now, the present study and its findings are offered to our colleagues with the hope that the information presented is valuable to those teaching in and directing the basic communication course.

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How Basic Course Directors (BCDs) Evaluate Teaching Assistants (TAs): Social Constructionism in BasicCourseLand

Nancy Buerkel-Rothfuss

Evaluation and feedback are crucial components of any organizational structure. Employees seek and receive feedback as a means to improve their job performance. Managers, directors, administrators and other supervisors offer feedback to subordinates in an attempt to enhance the overall quality of the organization. Knowing how others perceive us is the first step in improving those perceptions and our position within the group.

In the basic course, evaluation of teaching staff frequently falls to one individual: the director (BCD) for that course (Hugenberg, Gray & Trank, 1993). How that evaluation occurs and what criteria are used may vary widely from one program to the next. Evaluation may be as simple as reviewing student opinion survey forms or as complex as observing/videotaping class sessions and offering detailed critiques of those performances for Teaching Assistants (TAs).

By its very nature, evaluation tends to be subjective. We assess some product as "good" or "bad," "appropriate" or "inappropriate" according to some criteria we establish, but those criteria may vary from one individual to another, from one context to the next, based on how we have constructed our realities about the teaching experience (see Shotter, 1993). One's own

preferences for teaching style, comfort in the classroom, strategies for motivating students, and so on can influence what we consider "good" in others. As a result, evaluations of the same TA may vary greatly, depending on who does the assessment. Worse, there are likely to be variations in judgments even when the same person is doing the evaluation. The same BCD may see events differently from day to day, week to week, and term to term, based on differences in that person's level of interest, fatigue, comfort, stress, and so on.

Teaching is an especially difficult activity to judge objectively. Who is to say when lecture works and when it does not? Generally, it would take more than one classroom observation for a BCD to make good judgments about teaching styles selected, clarity and appropriateness of objectives, quality of activities used overall, and other pedagogical choices. BCDs can observe the quality of interaction between TAs and students, but it's often difficult to parcel out the effects of time of day, day of week, time of semester, immediately past events in the course (e.g., return of an especially difficult assignment on which most students fared poorly), and so on. Furthermore, BCDs can observe preparation, confidence, and knowledge of subject matter and may draw some conclusions about credibility but, once again, these evaluations must be couched in tentative terms if they are made only once or twice each term.

Of course, there remain the questions of validity and reliability. What do the descriptors used in those evaluations "mean" and do those meanings hold true for everyone using the same terms? What is a "competent" instructor? What makes up a "good" teacher?

According to early linguists, the terminology we have available to describe an event or observation influence how we see and think about what we experience

in the world (Whorf, 1956). Thus, the degree of differentiation inherent in our terminology determines our ability to talk and think about specific distinctions. For example, a BCD who has experience differentiating between "one-way" lectures and "interactive" lectures can talk about specific distinctions between the two without necessarily resorting to labels such as "good" or "bad." Another BCD who has never learned to differentiate among the various levels of learning (knowledge, comprehension, application, and so on) may not be able to distinguish between questions that test knowledge-level objectives and those that require synthesis of materials. Thus, the variety of terms we have for a stimulus can influence the degree to which we can identify the nuances that differentiate that stimulus from others that may be quite similar.

Additionally, people with varying experiences will have different interpretations for the same terms. For example, "competent" to one BCD may mean highly skilled; to another it may be acceptable but just barely! What constitutes a "good" lecture to one BCD may be a "dry, pedantic, one-way presentation" (with lots of good information and plenty of examples) to another. Individuals who tend to think in bipolar terms often see greater differentiation between groups of individuals (the "good" guys and the "bad" guys) than those who can see the many gradients of gray between black and white (Delia, O'Keefe, & O'Keefe, 1982). Thus, the labels BCDs routinely use to evaluate (and perhaps even to think about) their TA staff members could color their overall perceptions about those individuals.

Recent research has provided innovative ways for BCDs to describe and think about TAs. Some of our colleagues differentiated among TAs based on their level of professional maturity and progress toward becoming a member of the professorate. From this perspective,

faculty regard TAs as being on a continuum from freshly recruited to the academic ranks (and, as a result, very eager but unprepared) to colleagues-in-training for the day when they, too, will become tenure-track faculty. Gray & Buerkel-Rothfuss (1993) identified eight possible TA "types" in an effort to develop a scale that would allow for better selection and training of graduate students to be teaching assistants. Those types included TAs who prefer to lecture ("lecturers"), TAs who try to become close to their students and want to be liked by them ("buddies"), TAs who think they should never be wrong about anything in front of their students ("omniscient"), TAs who prefer a standardized course which requires little original thought from them ("followers"), TAs who believe that teaching is a popularity contest rather than a set of skills that can be learned and improved ("performer/personality") and TAs who would rather have a research assistantship ("researcher").

More recently, Buerkel-Rothfuss & Gray (1995) discussed various other approaches to differentiating among TAs: (1) TA attitudes toward and expectations about teaching, (2) TA attitudes toward and expectations about the overall graduate school experience, and (3) TA attitudes toward and beliefs about students. Thus, according to these researchers, it is possible to think of TAs in terms of their approach to teaching, the value they place on teaching relative to other activities in graduate school, their beliefs about what motivates students and how they should be led or managed in the classroom, and so on. While not necessarily a better coding scheme than thinking of TAs as "good/bad" or "competent/incompetent," these approaches do yield richer information about BCD perceptions and evaluations. They also offer the potential for more usable feedback for the TAs themselves.

Although no hypotheses were developed for this study, it was assumed that a BCD's experiences would shape the types of evaluations used. For example, in departments where a standardized student opinion survey form is administered, this form probably plays a role in TA evaluations. Thus, BCDs from those departments might use the terminology from the evaluation forms as a basis for discussing TA abilities (e.g., is prepared for class, respects students, etc.). Likewise, departments which focus energies on TA training and on faculty teaching improvement were expected to have lists of teaching strategies which might be evaluated in classroom observations (e.g., has set clear objectives, asks open-ended questions, uses immediacy behaviors). BCDs who have minimal responsibility for TA training and supervision probably have fewer categorization schemes for describing TAs than those who are more actively involved in TA success or failure, unless, of course, those BCDs had received prior training in communication pedagogy. BCDs who have only minimal concern for TA teaching probably have the fewest category schemes of all.

The purpose of this study was to begin to explore the ways BCDs describe and evaluate TAs. In particular, the goal was to determine what terminology/descriptors basic course directors use to describe their TA teaching staff. What do they talk about when they describe their TAs? What language do they use for assessment? Several research questions guided this investigation:

RQ1: How systematically do BCDs evaluate TA instructors?

RQ2: What counts as "data" for these evaluations? Course observations? Conversations with TAs? Social interactions with TAs? Specific evaluation forms?

RQ3: What terms do BCDs use to evaluate TAs as instructors? How complex are their categorization schemes? Is there any relationship between how BCDs describe TAs and research on TA "types?"

METHOD

Data were collected between Spring 1993 and Spring 1994 from a convenience sample of 46 basic course directors at both public and private institutions in four southwestern states and two large state universities in the Midwest (a total of 12 institutions). BCDs in the sample were identified by their department chairs/heads and were located using campus phone directories. They were recruited from a variety of departments, not just communication. Fifteen were from the sciences, nine were from English, nine were from communication, three were from Psychology, five were from Family Studies, one was from Communication Disorders, and four were from departments of Foreign Languages. To be in the sample, a BCD had to (1) have been a BCD for at least five years, (2) have supervised or been responsible for no fewer than five TAs each year, and (3) have had major responsibility for training/supervision of TAs on their staffs (if any was available). Initial contacts were made by telephone. Eighteen people were contacted who did not meet those criteria; after a brief conversation about their general responsibilities, those BCDs were thanked for their time and the interviews ended at that point.

After establishing that they met the three criteria for inclusion in the sample, each BCD was asked a series of questions from a scheduled, open-ended questionnaire. In particular, BCDs were asked (1) how fre-

quently and in what way(s) they observe TA teaching, (2) what other methods they use to assess TA ability and competence, and (3) on what types of interactions and in which contexts TAs are evaluated. These questions were not probed to any significant degree. BCDs were also asked to describe what training, if any, TAs in their department receive prior to or during their teaching experience and the degree to which the BCDs participate in that process.

The directors were then asked to describe the "types" of teaching assistants they have had working for them over the years. The question was open-ended and the only clarification offered was that the BCD could offer whatever descriptions seemed most appropriate for the nature of his/her staff and the context in which they work. The interviewer recorded any use of descriptors (adjectives, labels, etc.) that could be equated to a categorization or evaluation scheme. After those descriptors were recorded, the interviewer further prompted subjects to describe "types" by asking again how the BCDs might differentiate among a given staff at any given time. This second question generally stimulated thinking on the subject of how to differentiate other than through simple evaluation.

Phone conversations lasted from 10 to 45 minutes in length. No one who was contacted by phone refused to participate in the research, although several asked for time to think about the topic and then returned the call to the researcher when they were ready to be interviewed. Five BCDs were contacted initially by phone but later were interviewed in person. These interviews took place in the BCDs' offices, at their request.

RESULTS

The first research question asked how systematically BCDs evaluate TA instructors. Only half (23) of the BCDs in the sample based their evaluations of TAs on personal in-class observations, and only five of those BCDs scheduled observations for every term of teaching. Most indicated that they only observe during the first term of teaching and then sporadically after that. Three of the BCDs said they observe TAs only at the TA's request. Only one, a communication faculty member, indicated that she observes TAs without advance warning; the others all set appointments for observations well in advance.

Of the remaining 23 BCDs in the sample, most (19) indicated that they rely on two sources of information about TA teaching for their evaluations: (1) student opinion survey forms and (2) complaints (or compliments?) from students enrolled in the course. These BCDs tended to schedule feedback appointments only when there were difficulties in a section of the course. The remaining four BCDs in this group tended to view themselves as resource people, not supervisors. TAs could come to them for advice but were likely to go to other faculty advisors instead. These BCDs had no formal control over TA performance evaluation, nor were there expectations in their departments that they would offer such services. All four indicated that their departments focus on graduate student research performance, not teaching. None of these four was a communication faculty member.

The second research question further explored the nature of the evaluations: "What counts as "data" for these evaluations? Course observations? Conversations

with TAs? Social interactions with TAs? Specific evaluation forms?"

As just discussed, student feedback was considered by BCDs in this sample to be a valid and reliable source of information about TA teaching. All 46 indicated that they examine and compare means on standardized teaching evaluation forms completed by students at the end of the term. All BCDs had a mental "cut-off point" below which performance is considered to be questionable. For most, this cut-off point was a mean score on the scale corresponding to "poor" or "inferior" ratings by students. Three of the BCDs indicated that they consider performance below the department and/or college/university mean to be cause for concern. Forty of the 46 said they read selected written comments, either before the TA receives them or as a courtesy to the TA after he or she has puzzled over the feedback alone. Twelve said they read all student written comments for all TAs in their charge. Coincidentally, these 12 BCDs were from departments that offered the smallest number of TA-taught courses or used TAs as discussion leaders in fairly small-size recitation sections. One BCD who supervises 35-40 TAs, each teaching two or three sections of their various basic courses, literally hee-hawed when asked if he read student comments: ". . . I'd go blind if I had to do that!" Only ten of the 46 indicated that they discuss student opinion forms with TAs directly.

According to the BCDs in this sample, student complaints about individual TAs tend to be taken seriously only when they occur in significant numbers. In fact, student opinions in general seemed to be of lesser concern than BCD or other faculty perceptions. A common sentiment was summed up this way: "If students knew what they needed from the course, they wouldn't be the students. They'd be the teachers." Many

of the BCDs in the sample indicated that they receive complaints from students but they tend to discount such problems as typical of any new instructor and only report results of such discussions to the TA when they focus on a common theme or complaint over time. Conversely, two BCDs viewed student feedback as the only valid perceptions. "If a student isn't happy, we have a dissatisfied customer. In this environment, that is close to unforgivable!"

When asked whether or not they give feedback based on social or casual interactions, virtually all of the BCDs in the sample emphatically claimed to discuss only teaching-related behaviors. Problems noted in informal settings tended not to enter into their discussions of TA ability or competence. One BCD went on to emphasize that it is his job to supervise teaching, not personal skills. He described some of his TAs as "very socially inept" but indicated he would never even consider addressing those concerns in discussions with or about them. The lone hold-out, a communication BCD, argued that it is his responsibility to turn out well-rounded graduates from the program. A communication student with a Ph.D. who cannot communicate would be "a blight on the reputation of the department."

The final research question focused on the specificity and complexity of the mental coding schemes used by BCDs to evaluate their staff: "What terms do BCDs use to evaluate TAs as instructors?" Although no hypothesis was posed, the expectation was that most BCDs would describe their staff members in fairly simplistic, bipolar terms.

All of the BCDs interviewed used evaluative words to differentiate among their TAs. In particular, over 90% began by dividing their staffs into two groups: "good" teachers and "not-so- good" or "bad" teachers. A

similar percentage referred to TA attitudes toward their jobs as a way to divide them into two groups: those who enjoy teaching and those who do not. All of the BCDs in the sample used bipolar terms to describe their TAs, suggesting that they evaluate them using a variety of judgments that put TAs into "good" or "bad" groupings. Adjectives used were the following:

- competent
- hard-working
- intelligent
- curious
- prepared
- goal-directed
- creative
- assertive
- dependable
- confident
- personable
- motivated
- bright
- mature
- professional
- dedicated
- task-oriented
- innovative
- respectful
- responsible
- likable
- successful

The implication was that some TAs fit into those descriptions while the others did not. Only two BCDs in this sample talked about using those terms as a continuum under which some TAs fit strongly and others to varying degrees (very dependable, generally dependable, somewhat dependable, etc.). One BCD explained that he rank-orders his new staff members based on how "competent" he perceives them to be after two or three weeks of teaching. With over 20 TAs on his staff, this procedure creates a finely differentiated scale. However, this BCD did not elaborate in any detail on how he made those assessments, even when asked follow-up probing questions. He can "just tell" how they should be ranked.

When probed further to differentiate among staff members, most BCDs moved to a categorization scheme

based on demographic information: Ph.D. students only/M.A. students only/a mix of both, from our institution/from other institutions, older/younger than the typical graduate student, majoring in X or Y, from a specific mix of ethnic or geographic backgrounds, etc. Two-thirds (31 of the 46) of the BCDs in the sample stopped at that point, unable to come up with other ways to describe their TAs, or returned to the earlier discussion of bipolar adjectives.

The 15 BCDs (five from communication) who offered other classification schemes described their TAs from a variety of perspectives, many of which were relevant to the TA expectation and attitude scales developed by Buerkel-Rothfuss and Gray (1995). These categorizations seemed not to come easily or naturally for the BCDs in the sample, however.

Five BCDs talked about general expectations for how TAs should interact with their students as ways to differentiate among their staff members. All five mentioned that TAs can get "into trouble" by trying to be "too similar to their students" and "trying to relate to them as equals." These BCDs described TAs who were "too close" to students (buddies) and those who tried for more of a professional distance. Problems with the TAs who tried to interact on the same level as their students included the following: difficulty with grading credibility later in the semester, conflicts with the BCDs over course policies, student complaints that the instructor was unprepared, and a tendency for the TA not to follow course policies and guidelines (especially dress codes). Behaviors observed (or learned about from third-party sources) included socializing with students at bars or parties; dating students; offering what might be considered "too much help" on assignments, especially those the TA did not like; holding office hours at

inappropriate times or in inappropriate places; and missing staff meetings.

Six BCDs mentioned amount and type of prior training and expertise as a way to differentiate among staff members. All six were responsible for staffs which included both Ph.D. and M.A. candidates, thus creating significant differences in experience levels among staff members. All six discussed the value of students beginning their Ph.D. programs having already had teaching experience and/or training elsewhere and the problems that arise when a TA has little or no prior experience: reticence in the classroom, loss of control, lack of credibility, perceptions of non-professionalism and a lack of preplanning for class. TA training was provided in all of the departments represented by these six BCDs. The two communication BCDs in this group referred directly to research by Nyquist and colleagues which differentiates among TAs based on their relative maturity as teachers: from newcomers to faculty-in-training.

Five BCDs talked about TAs' attitudes toward and expectations about students as ways to differentiate among them. In particular, some TAs tend to exaggerate the difference between them and their students, resulting in a tendency for those TAs to "talk down" to undergraduates (the omniscient TA type?). Others become excessively frustrated with their classes because they assume that all students are like they were as undergraduates: striving to get As, in class every day to learn the material, eager to read and complete assignments in advance, etc. Although no one directly addressed these expectations as being ways of viewing students (externally motivated vs. internally motivated), some of the comments suggested a recognition that TAs as instructors can influence how their experience will go as teachers based on the assumptions they

make about the nature of their audiences. Those TAs who believe students need rewards and punishments tend to over-structure their courses, rely heavily on "pop quizzes" to assure reading, call on students in class and put them on the spot as a way to make sure they will be prepared, cover the material from the book with little elaboration, and feel threatened by student questions in class. TAs who believe students are more like them often fail to cover material in sufficient depth or set objectives that are "over the heads" of their students, sometimes use language that is too sophisticated, and are frustrated with their teaching experiences earlier in the term than others.

Three BCDs, all from science departments, talked about the tendency for some TAs to accept an assistantship merely for the money (TA as researcher?), which all three found to be frustrating. According to those BCDs, TAs in this category frequently neglect their teaching responsibilities in favor of their own graduate work. Those who take the assistantship seriously view it as a "job" and resent intrusions into their lives that would not be expected to be part of a job, such as phone calls from students at home, surprise visits from students at times other than office hours, etc. In one subject's department, teaching is something the first and second-year TAs must do; after that, about half of the best and brightest among them can shift to research assistantships, which carry a 20% higher stipend. The message in that department is that teaching is something you must do but research is something the privileged are allowed to do.

No BCD in this sample directly referred to TAs as assuming different types of teaching styles, such "lecturer" or "follower" (Gray & Buerkel-Rothfuss, 1993). An occasional mention was made of TAs who expect too much from the BCD ("He expected me to provide him

with a syllabus, lesson plans, exam questions--everything!), which might suggest a "follower" type of TA. Several BCDs noted that some TAs are more reticent than others and that the reticent ones are better at leading small group discussions or working in lab or study sections than as lecturers. At least one BCD noted that TAs can get into trouble when they pretend to know everything (the "omniscient") or when they answer every question with "I don't know." Three BCDs referred to themselves as "actors" or "performers" when teaching. Of those, one speech communication BCD trains her TAs to be as engaging as possible and provides them with as many visual aids or other attention-getting devices as possible. She maintains a list of films appropriate for the course, has a set of PowerPoint presentations to be used with a portable projection computer set-up, has a file of fairly elaborate simulations and activities in her office, and uses much of her staff time to generate creative ways of presenting information to students. In an effort to adapt to the MTV generation, some lessons are loosely based around popular media personalities such as Seinfeld, the characters on Friends and even "Spooky Fox" Mulder!

DISCUSSION

The results of this study illustrate the diversity of approaches with which we attack the problem of evaluating basic course staff and give some credence to the claim that BCDs would benefit from exposure to alternative evaluation strategies. Only 15 of the 46 BCDs interviewed for this study could go beyond simple evaluations and demographic descriptors to talk about the TAs in their teaching staffs. However, many of those 15 provided multiple approaches for categorization.

While there is nothing inherently wrong in labeling a TA instructor as "competent" or "incompetent," "motivated" or "unmotivated," and so on, these labels do little to provide information to the TA about how to improve. Furthermore, beginning with such a label may start the appraisal interview on a defensive note, leading to little acceptance of the feedback. Use of such labels could color future observations and conversations by structuring the BCDs' expectations about that TA (Shotter, 1993).

Instead, there would be value in feedback that further describes behaviors and attaches a more behavior-based "label" to the observations. For example, "You are trying too hard to be liked by your students. I have concluded this because I see you grading much more easily than other staff members, using examples that would tend to appeal to less-than-dedicated students (going to the bar, getting "wasted") but could be offensive to the more serious students, allowing students to get you off track during class, and socializing with students during your office hours" might be a better way to offer this feedback than to say "You need to take this job more seriously. You seem more concerned with being liked than being a good teacher."

Perhaps this claim does no more than reinforce interpersonal communication research that argues that descriptive, specific feedback is preferable to general comments and likely to lead to better relationships and more productive results. We can improve behaviors that are specified and described. We can acknowledge attitudes that are identified. Whatever the theoretical basis for the assertion, we can assume that complex, detailed, specific, descriptive feedback will produce better results than thinking of a TA as a "good" teacher or a "not good" teacher. Presumably most of us believe we already know how to give specific, descriptive feed-

back. Nevertheless, it would appear from these conversational data that BCDs could use some assistance in making those evaluations.

In many of our basic communication courses, we discuss social constructionism as a way to explain differences in perceptions (Whorf, 1956). What we do not always remember to add, however, is what advantages having a variety of labels can provide. Being able to differentiate among TAs on more than a gross "good/bad" level could help BCDs offer job performance feedback and ongoing supervision better tailored to the specific needs, values and expectations of staff members. "Buddy" TAs can be taught the disadvantages of getting too close to students. Knowing that they tend to be "buddies" can alert their supervisors to keep a closer watch on their behaviors, too. These are the TAs that could attract the favoritism and/or sexual harassment claims. "Follower" TAs can be motivated to take more responsibility for their students and development of their classes. Because "follower" types tend to be speech anxious (Gray & Buerkel- Rothfuss, 1993), attention to building their presentational confidence could provide the motivation they need to become more self-directed instructors. "Omniscient" TAs can be assured that perfection is not necessary, which may reduce much strain for them and create a more flexible classroom environment for their students. All of the TAs in our charge could benefit, if we make the effort to determine what makes them unique.

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Get Your Modem Runnin', Get Out on the I-way: Encouraging Internet Investigations in the Basic Course[1]

Glen Williams
Joni M. Johnson-Jones

Now, more than ever, students have begun to rely upon the power of the desktop computer and the conveniences it provides when internetworked with other computers. They need only an account and a password to log onto the campus system and can use the access in a variety of productive ways. Students can add or drop classes, view campus news and events, post an intramural sports schedule, use electronic mail to contact a professor or classmate, or search the library's catalog and some of its indexes as well as renew books or submit interlibrary loan requests. In addition, many have begun to appreciate what lies beyond their local networks. The Internet has become increasingly rich with information as well as easy to navigate, and as a result many have taken to the information superhighway, dubbed "I-way" for short.

Professors likewise have increased their reliance upon the internetworking of computers. Many are taking advantage of the opportunities and convenience it provides for correspondence and for locating and retrieving information. They have harnessed the medium to forward teaching and research since materials can be

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exchanged much quicker than via the conventional print medium. Many instructors also have begun to employ the Internet in their teaching; a recent survey found that 24% of college courses include the use of "Web resources" (Guernsey, 1997, p. A30). At the same time, though, those who best understand the Internet view the on-line frenzy with some well-founded alarm, advising caution because of the largely unregulated and disorganized nature of the medium (see Snyder, 1995). Although abundant, high quality, up-to-the-minute information is posted on the Internet, much questionable material also resides there. And while instructors may be comfortable with their own ability to evaluate the integrity of information and discriminate among sites, they remain wary about encouraging students to explore the wilds. Other instructors view the untamed terrain as ideal for testing and improving students' critical abilities. They realize that hitting the "I-way" can yield good results if users employ a few cautions, and they take it upon themselves to teach students to be judicious.

This article shares this latter mind-set, recommending that instructors encourage students to utilize the Internet as *one* of their investigative resources. For colleagues not comfortably acquainted with the Internet, this paper begins with a brief primer on the nature of the I-way and an overview of some of the resources available and how to utilize them. Next, the paper discusses how instructors can help students learn to proceed responsibly, and it introduces a few assignments instructors might use to encourage students to investigate via the Internet.

TRAVELING THE I-WAY

"Net," abbreviated from "Internet," refers to the internetworking of computers from around the world. In the past few years the Internet has grown exponentially, with new sites appearing every minute, adding to the millions already there. Organizations, companies, corporations, agencies, schools, colleges, universities, libraries, repositories, interest groups, politicians, and countless individuals have scrambled to establish a presence (see Andrews & Herschel, 1996). Hence, on the Internet the user can encounter information and opinions on almost any topic imaginable and not only in textual form but also in images, sound, and video.

Locating and Retrieving Information On the World Wide Web

Cyberspace, once completely unmapped and mysterious, remained inaccessible to all but those with specialized skill and knowledge. In the past few years Cyberspace increasingly has become more user-friendly. Among recent innovations was the creation of the World Wide Web and advanced, yet easy to use, Web browser software (such as Netscape and Internet Explorer) for exploring and retrieval. To locate information for a speech topic, the user can proceed in a variety of ways. One might locate information by conducting a keyword search, by exploring various links between pages and sites, or by traveling directly to a page if the address is known.

When starting from scratch, with no information or leads about particular sites, the user could begin with a search — usually an option on the menu bar. Any of sev-

eral popular Web databases, such as Infoseek, Excite, Lycos, Yahoo, and Magellan, can connect the user directly to on-line newspapers and magazines, agencies and organizations, and more. In addition, each database is searchable. To initiate a search, the user will simply enter in the designated bar a key word or two that best describes the subject. For example, if one is interested in Ozone depletion and the severity of the damage, he or she could enter "ozone layer hole." Once the user has designated the term or terms, a search engine will go to work, scanning an index of sites that have titles or abundant information that matches the key word or words you have supplied. In a matter of seconds it will return a listing of Web pages. Once the list appears, the user will simply scroll through it and click on any entries that appear promising and will then travel directly to that site or file. To return to the list, the user will simply click on the appropriate menu button to go back. To return to the menu of Web databases, the user would likewise just keep clicking the way back.

To conduct an effective search on the Web, users need to be aware of a few factors. For one, they must be mindful that search engines often provide a superficial view of what might be available and often return an incomplete listing of its findings. Each of these engines use different criteria for a search and will return information based upon that criteria. As a result, each searching mechanism will generate a somewhat or completely different list. Hence, if one engine does not produce the hoped-for results, the user should launch one from another database. To obtain the best results, the user should use several different search engines. The user might also vary the keywords, using the same engine to search a new term or terms. The user should keep in mind that merely retrying the same descriptors with the same engine will not yield new results, at least

not so long as the sites or files that are available remain the same. Sites or pages which disappear obviously will not make the list again, and new sites or files that appear may better match the criteria used by the engine and thus make the list and bump off one that appeared previously. This manner of searching by key word or words can prove effective. Users simply need to proceed by trial and error.

As an alternative to the search engine, users may wish to explore the Internet via subject directories. Many on-line databases (such as Yahoo) provide this alternative, categorizing — by subject — various Web pages. Users simply click on a subject, and direct links to numerous, relevant sites will appear (see Reddick & King, 1996).

Similarly, users can search for relevant information via links that they encounter on any given Web page. Links are a central component of the Web. Web Space is governed by HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP), and documents on the Web are written in HyperText Markup Language (HTML). Within a Web page the user will find hyperlinks — highlighted words and phrases that, with a click of the mouse, establish a link to another file or site. A page also may contain hypermedia, graphical buttons or image maps, which contain links to other files and other sites. Because of this format, users often read a little from a file and then click their way on to another locale. Authors of Web pages understand this form and write accordingly. They assume that a user will not read an entire page from top to bottom but will consult the page for some specific information and then move on to another segment or site suggested by a link, and then on to another, and so on.

Links may lead to sites that prove fruitful. Keep in mind that every file has its own unique Uniform Resource Locator, or URL, which will enable you to return

directly to that particular file without having to retrace your steps and travel through various layers; you can simply use the Open Location command and enter the URL. To maximize efficiency, most software will allow the user to record a URL via a simple command, often called a bookmark. The user will want to establish a bookmark (via the menu bar) for each file that is valuable, or else jot down the URL that is indicated on the "Show Location" line. Users should keep in mind that the URL is bibliographic information they will need in their list of references.

The Uniform Resource Locator provides another way to investigate a topic. If one obtains the URL of a particular Web site that likely will have relevant information, he or she can travel there instantly, as described above, by using the Open Location command and entering the URL. For example, if one wished to know the latest figures for the incidence of diabetes to develop a speech, she or he could visit the Web pages of the American Diabetes Association, located at <www.diabetes.org>. In addition to what information they provide, their Web pages can help the user access information about various local incidence rates because the site features links to the Web pages of agencies and organizations in states throughout the country.

Most URLs are kept simple, as in the example above, so that users can better remember the address or so that they might be able to guess what it may be. Sample Web page addresses include:

- American Cancer Society = <www.cancer.org>
- United States Department of Transportation = <www.dot.gov>
- Federal Bureau of Investigation = <www.fbi.gov>
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention = <www.cdc.gov>

As these examples illustrate, finding quality information on the Internet is easy and requires only a few, simple keystrokes.

Advances in software not only assist in locating information, they simplify its retrieval and use. Since the information is sent to one's computer and stored on the clipboard, the user may have the option to save it to a file on the hard drive or a floppy disk, cut and paste it into a word-processing document, or to send it to his or her own e-mail address. Options and procedures will vary, but the computer support personnel at one's school should be able to advise and instruct on the process. Students using a computer in a lab will not want to save permanently to the hard drive but to their own floppy disk or else e-mail the file to their e-mail address.

Other Means for Connecting, Locating, and Retrieving

Two other principal tools that users may encounter are Telnet and FTP. Usually these operate in the background of a Web browser, but a user may have to use them directly to locate and retrieve information as the user researches a topic. Telnet is an application that allows a user to connect with a remote host and view the information available there. For example, a library's system may allow users to "telnet" to the catalogs of other libraries who have their catalogs on line. Similarly, the campus system may allow users to "telnet" to various databases, such as the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). What is available will vary from school to school. Once one arrives at a Telnet host, it likely will present files of text material that are organized by directories and subdirectories. The user will simply have to work through the menus, exploring what

is available. Rather than having the luxury of a bookmark utility, the user will need to keep track of how she or he proceeded, recording the choices made while exploring the various menus. If the user wished to explore other remote sites, the local system might have Hytelnet, which provides a subject directory of various Telnet sites and can help connect with their host.

FTP (File Transfer Protocol) is a method for retrieving a file from a distant host that, like Telnet, usually operates unnoticed in the background of the user's browsing software. There may be an occasion, though, where one needs to use FTP to retrieve a file from a remote site. Whereas the process used to require substantial know-how, it has been simplified by various user-friendly programs. Often a file is compressed for transfer. If so, the user will need to decompress it before he or she will be able to use it. Again, various programs exist that simplify the process. The user will simply need to contact the local computer support personnel for assistance.

SUGGESTED TRIPS: LIBRARIES, VENDORS, AND PUBLISHERS

Some areas of the Internet are more reliable than others, such as sites established and maintained by libraries, vendors and publishers. The American Library Association reports that "most college and university libraries, many public libraries, and some school libraries" (Whiteley, 1994, p. 23) have placed their catalog and other databases on-line, though access to the latter may be limited to cardholders.

On-line availability benefits libraries and users alike. Libraries will require fewer electronic workstations and, hence, will conserve money and space. Users

can search and print out findings at their home or office — a convenience that can allow them to spend less time en-route to the library and more time searching for materials. Even though an investigation for relevant information may be conducted from a remote location and even though they may even be able to retrieve a number of documents electronically, users likely will need to spend some actual time at the library because a lot of materials remain available only in print form. For this reason, instructors must help students become comfortable with both virtual and physical visits to the library; today's "tour" of the library will acquaint users with both.

In addition to what is available on-line from libraries, a number of vendors offer on-line information and services. Vendors, such as CompuServ, offer access to professional and scholarly databases as well as e-mail. Subscription and/or use fees vary (see Whiteley, 1994). If one does not have access to a library's databases on-line, a vendor might provide an attractive alternative.

Publishers also have taken to the Internet. The *American Journalism Review* reports that "more than 3,600 newspapers now publish on the Internet" (Meyer, 1997, p. 1), though what appears may or may not be as comprehensive as a print counterpart. Newsmagazines, too, commonly publish on the Internet, though — as in the case of newspapers — what appears may be significantly abbreviated in comparison what may be published in print copy. Nonetheless, what appears may be useful information as one investigates a topic.

BILLBOARDS, PITSTOPS AND CONVERSATIONS

In addition to countless databases accessible on-line, many other Internet resources can be utilized as one investigates a topic. These include communication applications, such as electronic mailings between individuals and among groups.

Using E-Mail

Electronic mail or e-mail, as it commonly is known, has become extremely popular as a result of its efficiency and versatility. To use e-mail effectively users need to be aware of standard practices. For example, people expect users to check their mail frequently and to respond in short order. Furthermore, unless pre-arranged with the receiver, messages should be kept short, simple, and to the point. Since e-mail is used for its quickness, receivers generally do not want to be burdened by a lengthy message that they have to scroll through (which can be a real chore on some systems!) or by inquiries that require an elaborate response.

For the student investigating the topic of a speech, e-mail can assist in a number of ways. For example, if a student wants to consult the instructor about the focus of a speech, possibilities for research, or some other matter related to the speech, the student does not have to wait until the next class period or for office hours; she or he can send the question to the instructor's e-mail address and receive a response the next time the instructor checks the mailbox. Instructors would do well to remind students, though, that these questions should be kept brief. If they need to discuss something at

length, they could e-mail a brief message to indicate the nature of the problem, request that the instructor call, and provide a number to call and the best times to call.

The student working on a speech also might benefit from sending and receiving messages beyond the local network. A student might, for example, use e-mail to request information from a relevant agency or person. The one solicited may be able to e-mail a response, but the student should be sure to include a postal address and, if available, a fax number in case the one contacted needs to send material via regular mail or by fax. In addition, although a student would not want to conduct a comprehensive interview via e-mail, if he or she had a quick question or two, it might be acceptable to solicit an answer via e-mail. Before making any requests for information, though, the student should make sure that it is not information that could be found with relative ease in printed materials or on that agency's or individual's home pages. An electronic mailing may also be appropriate for requesting and arranging for an interview by phone or face to face.

E-mail presents other advantages as well. It can be printed if the user needs a hard copy. It also can be saved to a file for later reference and can even be pasted into a word processing document. This versatility, coupled with its speed, has prompted more and more people to use the medium.

Utilizing News Groups and Mailing Lists

News groups and mailing lists might also assist a student's endeavors. News groups are people who meet in Cyberspace to exchange information and opinions about a given topic area and to provide a network for those with similar interests and concerns. Software

(such as Newswatcher) exists to help users locate a relevant group and read their various postings. In addition, a search engine occasionally may suggest a news group and provide a hyperlink to the group's discussion site. Mailing lists, also known as Listservs, are available via subscription (often at no fee). As with news groups, mailing lists exist for a variety of topic areas, and subscribers will receive every mailing to the list. Any message a subscriber sends to the list will be mailed to every subscriber.

News groups and mailing lists can assist in a number of ways. If a student is having trouble finding a specific focus for a general topic, a relevant group/list may help the student discover what would be a viable and timely subarea. Several subtopics may appear, any of which might set off an ongoing dialogue. For example, a news group named "talk.environment" recently posted messages concerning the legality of logging in ancient forests in the West — a good focus for a speech exploring an environmental issue. In addition to helping the student sharpen her or his focus, postings might reveal helpful sources. Contributors to the dialogue often supply the URL to a relevant site or the e-mail address or regular postal address for a relevant agency, official, or expert whom the reader can contact for information and assistance.

When the student discovers a group/list that discusses matters pertaining to his or her topic, the student can simply monitor the dialogue or can post an entry. Any postings requesting information likely will obtain the better results if the request is revealed in the title or in the first few lines of the entry. In addition, instructors might advise students to present, in brief, what they know thus far about a subject and what remains unknown or not fully understood. As one author explains, "If you look like you've done your homework

and are trying to get answers to some final questions, you're likely to get a better reception than if it looks like you're too lazy to go to the library" (Snyder, 1995, p. 130). To ensure that a response is reliable, the solicitor might request, within the query, that respondents suggest relevant readings or Web sites. The scholarly merit of their suggestions will reveal a lot about their own expertise.

EYEING THE GAUGES

It is wild and untamed. It is a place where anything goes. The Internet provides both high-quality materials as well as low- quality materials. Other professors note, similarly, that the Internet contains "a great deal of useless information" (Wilkinson, Bennett, & Oliver, 1997, p. 52). In addition to "useless" information, some information may be harmful. For example, with regard to sites about cancer, Elizabeth Gomez, Registered Nurse and editor of *ONS Online* (1997) warns: "Many of these sources are authoritative and reliable; others, however, are well-intentioned but misinformed, while still others may deliberately mislead the user" (p. 9). Hence, users have to be wary. This wide range of quality is a chief concern among professors and librarians. Editors and librarians serve as gatekeepers for what is housed in libraries, but no gatekeepers exist for the whole of the Internet. The user is on her or his own. Therefore, students need training in evaluating materials on the electronic highway critically.

Users can employ a few simple tests to evaluate what they encounter. These tests include evaluations of accuracy, completeness, recency, and reliability. To be judged as accurate means that the information is redundant and verifiable. In other words, one should dis-

cover essentially the same factual or statistical information from several independent sources. To consult several independent sources would suggest whether the information had been acquired via a thorough inquiry. If so, one could deem it complete. To be judged as recent, which may be vital for some subjects, one would need to be certain that the information is current. The date the page was created or updated is one sign, but the user also would want to consult other sources to gain more assurance that the material is up-to-date. To be considered reliable, one should be able to judge the source as objective, trustworthy, and competent.

In addition to discussing these general concerns with students, an instructor may wish to provide specific directives akin to the following:

First, select sources that provide as much of the following information as possible:

- name and title/position of author(s)
- organizational affiliation of author(s)
- date the page was created or updated
- how to contact the author

Next, apply the usual tests for information quality, including:

- Does the source seem credible, such as having the relevant credentials?
- Is the source affiliated with a credible organization?
- Is the content consistent with that of other credible sources?
- Does the source provide links to other relevant, credible sites?
- Is the information up-to-date?

- Do claims reflect balanced, well-reasoned argument?
- Does the source provide a one-sided view or do they acknowledge other views?

DRIVER'S TRAINING: ASSIGNMENTS FOR STUDENTS

The following collection of assignments include assignments for evaluating and citing information encountered on the Internet, for investigating contemporary or historical topics, for investigating and analyzing the properties of historical and contemporary speeches, and for exchanging information and ideas with others researching or contemplating the same topic.

Assignment One

An instructor could have students visit Internet sites regarding evaluating sources on the Internet and compare their instructions with those offered in the textbook regarding tests of source material. Many quality sites exist, often created and posted by librarians on their library's Web pages. For example, Purdue University (Brand, 1988) and the University of Texas both offer this assistance (see References for the URLs). Individuals also have created helpful on-line information. Harris (1998), at Southern California College, for example, has created an impressive Web page that provides helpful guidelines. Students could visit these or similar sites and report their findings in a brief written and/or oral report to the class. The instructor could then create a master list of guidelines, supplementing what is offered in the text with what students found on the

Internet. The instructor might even post the newly-compiled set of guidelines on her or his Web pages.

Assignment Two

The instructor could devise an assignment on her or his Web pages where students are to explore and critique (in writing) various sites for which the instructor has set up links. The instructor might, for example, list a set of topics and for each topic provide links to three or more relevant sites. The sites could vary in terms of whether biased or more objective, dated or recent, or authored by an expert versus others by authors of questionable expertise. For illustration purposes, an instructor might even wish to retain any dead links. A dead link would reveal the fluidity of the I-way: What is available one moment may disappear the next.

To simplify submission of the assignment, the instructor may wish to set up a Web page for each set of URLs that serves as a "form" for the students to complete. Beneath each URL the student could enter his or her critique and simply e-mail it to the instructor. (Note to Instructors: Electronic submissions guarantee that the assignment will be typed!)

Assignment Three

As an addition to assignment two, the instructor might also require students to locate and critique additional sites relevant to the particular topic they chose in assignment two. Students would submit the complete URL along with their critique of the site. If submitted electronically, programs such as Netscape Mail automatically convert the complete URL to a hyperlink, al-

lowing the instructor to travel directly to the site referenced so she or he can evaluate the student's critique. The instructor can add his or her comments, along with the grade, and e-mail the appended file back to the student.

Assignment Four

For reasons mentioned earlier in this paper, students would do well to explore relevant news groups and mailing lists. Hence, an instructor might have students visit a news group to inventory the issues being discussed as well as to evaluate the integrity of various contributions. The student could copy and paste select contributions into an e-mail to the instructor, along with a brief critique of the quality and importance of each contribution, utilizing the same criteria described above.

Instructors will need to consult their school's computer center or departmental computer lab's personnel to determine what software is available. The instructor might wish to spend a few moments trying it to see how it works and to find a current example or two to print out and/or post to her or his Web pages to show students.

Assignment Five

As a modified version of assignment four, an instructor might have students post an inquiry to a group or list, after monitoring the dialogue for at least one week. The instructor might remind students to do so politely and thoughtfully (and along the lines of what has been

suggested above), so to observe what some have labeled "netiquette."

Assignment Six

Instructors may encourage students to conduct a mini- interview via e-mail. To do so, the student would simply e-mail a quick question or two to a relevant source. Students could copy and paste the reply into an annotated bibliography as well as paste any line they wish to quote into the text of their speech. If students e-mail an inquiry to an agency or organization via its Web pages, they should be prepared to wait longer for a response than if they had e-mailed a particular individual.

Assignment Seven

If students are using sources found on the Internet, the instructor would do well to have students submit the bibliography for their projects via e-mail (along with a hard copy attached to the formal outline of the speech, should the instructor so desire). If submitted electronically, as explained above in assignment three, the instructor may be able to travel directly to any Web page that is cited. In this manner, the instructor will be able to view the consulted site firsthand and with ease.

Assignment Eight

In order to monitor students' progress with research (and to encourage them to get an early start!), instructors might have students submit a brief bibliography indicating their research-in-progress. If submitted elec-

tronically, instructors can type quick feedback about the progress seen, as well as travel to any Internet sources listed. To encourage students' thinking about their speech, the instructor may wish to have students provide a quick annotation about how each entry contributes to their speech and how they can integrate the material.

Assignment Nine

Instructors may wish to have students investigate how to format references so to be accurate and complete. Various Web sites exist to assist students, including pages for APA and MLA styles:

- APA = <www.apa.org/journals/webref.html>
- MLA = <www.mla.org/main_stl.htm#sources>

Several other sites exist that one often can locate via a search engine.

Assignment Ten

If an instructor wished to establish a forum for his or her class (or groups within the class) to discuss their findings or thoughts about a particular subject under investigation, the instructor could set up a listserv which (as explained above) is a mailing list that allows e-mail from an individual to be read by many people. The instructor would simply contact the school's computer center to set up one or more lists (depending whether the instructor wanted only one for the entire class, and/or ones for students working on group projects). An instructor might even work cooperatively with

colleagues at other colleges or universities so that the class could interact with students and professors at one or more other institutions. Towards the end of the term, each class could post a group photo so each class could "meet" their virtual classmates.

Set-up is simple. Once the list is set-up, each student will simply need to send an e-mail to subscribe, following a set of simple guidelines. Once they have subscribed, they will use the service as they would any other e-mail, but the nature of the communications would primarily be task-related. Instructors, of course, will also want to subscribe so they can monitor the discussion as well as contribute from time to time, just as they might monitor and intermittently enter group activities in the classroom. Individuals at a distant location likewise would need merely subscribe.

Used in this manner, the listserv can save valuable class time, promote ongoing reflection and creative exchange about a topic, as well as enable people to "meet"/participate at a time best-suited to their individual schedules. In addition, instructors might wish to have students evaluate how the listserv affected their endeavors in terms of its usefulness, and so on.

Assignment Eleven

If you wish to have your students explore what has been said, historically, about a given social issue, or if you wish to have them investigate how successful speakers have crafted a speech, you could have them visit one of many collections of public discourse that are available on the Internet. One of the best collections is Northwestern University's "Douglass Archives of American Public Address" — named after Frederick Douglass (<http://douglass.speech.nwu.edu>). Users can

search the collection by speaker, title of address, or by controversy/movement. Users also can explore the collection chronologically. In addition to featuring various examples of American oratory, it also contains related documents, enabling students to investigate the context surrounding the discourse.

Assignment Twelve

An instructor could have students evaluate an important sample of current public discourse, such as a State of the Union address, by posting it on his or her Web pages. Contemporary public discourse is posted widely on the Internet. In the case of the State of the Union address, one can find it via <www.whitehouse.gov>. In addition, listservs such as CRTNET (accessible via e-mail subscription at <crtnet@lists.psu.edu>), often post complete texts of contemporary public discourse. As with assignment ten, students could post their reactions and criticisms to a listserv for their class and any other participants. Postings should be kept brief. If more than one class is participating, each class might post its overall critique for the other classes to view. On-line and in-class discussion could follow.

Assignment Thirteen

An instructor might modify assignment eleven so that students view (or locate on their own!) a speech which illustrates a particular principle of effective speaking that is discussed in the textbook and/or in class. For example, if the instructor is providing a speech that models visualization, she or he might have students view Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream."

This speech can be found at <http://douglass.-speech.nwu.edu/king_b12.htm>. Students could identify and discuss relevant excerpts in a brief written assignment—which could be submitted electronically.

CONCLUSION

The local computer network and the Internet can prove extremely valuable for the speech writer. E-mail provides a great way to communicate and to store retrieved information. The World Wide Web and its browser software have simplified Cyberspace, making it easier to locate and retrieve information. News groups and listservs help pinpoint issues and, in addition to providing a running commentary, often point the way to a relevant Web site or to recent printed material or provide the address or phone number of people and organizations one might wish to contact. In these ways and more, going on line can be very helpful to individuals and to groups.

Despite these advantages, instructors may hesitate to send students onto the I-way. This paper acknowledges that caution must be exercised and tries to assist instructors with any attempts to encourage student explorations of the Net. What this paper provides is but initial guidance. Ultimately, instructors will need to take to the I-way themselves in order to decide what is best for their students and what resources are most helpful. Doing so is important not just because of the necessity of hands-on experience for learning and for appreciation, but because of the very nature of the Net: constantly growing, evolving and changing. In addition, instructors likely will want to select a textbook that provides students with a good introduction to the Internet and pointers for how to proceed responsibly.

Once instructors and students have an appreciation for the Internet and an understanding for how to use it responsibly, it can greatly assist and enhance investigations. As with any technology, once one begins using it, soon the person will wonder how she or he ever managed without it.

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Will the Dazzling Promise Blind Us? Using Technology in the Beginning Public Speaking Course[1]

Mary Mino

Technology is changing the educational landscape in higher education. Like our colleagues in other disciplines, many communication educators envision an enriched educational environment based on the use of technology. Certainly, technology can provide an immense opportunity in academic settings (Althaus, 1997; Berge, 1994; McComb, 1994; Niemi & Gooler, 1987; Wagner, Heye, & Tsai, 1996). Johnston (1996) suggested that technology is a resource for expanding and creating new options for education because it can access individual learning styles and needs. Moreover, Chesebro and Bertelsen (1996) asserted that:

> [t]eachers of communication need to reconsider the kind of commitment and the scope of the commitment they have made in terms of communication technologies. Foremost among these decisions have been two decisions that warrant attention: (1) the decision to focus on the content or ideas expressed in any given media system; and (2) the decision to focus on a single mode of communication intrinsically without adopting a corresponding comparative media or

[1] Portions of an earlier version of this essay was presented at the 1998 Eastern Communication Association's Distinguished Teaching Fellows panel, Saratoga, New York.

> technological base when characterizing a mode of communication. (p. 171)

Because proponents of technology promise it will improve instruction, many beginning public speaking instructors are convinced that they must use or consider using various types of technology when delivering the basic course. However, in an attempt to adapt to dazzling state-of-the-art technology, we may become blinded by our limitations; specifically, we may fail to understand fully the medium we employ and our effectiveness when using that medium. As Pallas (1986) noted, "technology needs to be state of the mind, not state of the art" (p. 5).

This essay provides an overview of some of the uses of technology in the basic public speaking course. It also presents some of the challenges and considers one process instructors may consider when deciding whether or not to incorporate technology into basic public speaking instruction.

USES OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE BASIC COURSE

Effective oral communication skills training is paramount for achieving personal and professional success. For example, Oblinger and Rush (1997) reported, when asked to rank on a scale of 1 to 5 the factors they use in making hiring decisions, employers ranked the applicant's attitude first (4.6) and the applicant's communication skills second (4.2). Thus, a primary goal of communication educators has been to discover innovative and effective methods of sharing course concepts that allow students to identify appropriate oral communication skills most effectively in various communica-

tion contexts (see, for example, Cronin & Kennan, 1994; Ford & Wolvin, 1993; Yoder & Wallace, 1995). Because of technological advances, new and fundamentally different options for teaching and learning exist (Massey, 1997). Thus, basic course instructors have explored these options in terms of computer and video technologies.

Computer Instruction

Technological competency is required in our society. Logan (1995) believed that the steady invasion of computers into schools and workplaces results in transformations in both domains. Thus, this technology challenges us to evaluate the organization of our educational system and workplace environments. Furthermore, Haynes (1990) contended that ". . . [m]edia systems and pedagogy affect each other, that electronic media increasingly dominate our society, and that pedagogy, especially communication pedagogy, must respond" (p. 90).

One method of response is Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI) which is often used as a generic term that refers to a variety of computer uses. According to Kuehn (1994), Computer-Assisted Instruction "will increase its presence in education on college and university campuses" (p. 181). Advocates believe that CAI can "be used to enhance communication among teachers and students from the perspective of a pedagogy that seeks to increase student responsibility and autonomy" (McComb, 1994, p. 159). Beginning public speaking course instructors can use the computer to share information through electronic mail, to design self-paced presentational software, or to incorporate graphic presentational software into the basic course classroom.

Electronic Mail

One application of CAI in basic course instruction includes having students communicate with the instructor through e-mail. Faculty and student e-mail adds a new dimension to academic communication (Guernesy, 1997a). Today, e-mail is used in almost a third of college courses (Guernesy, 1997b). At any given time or during electronic office hours, e-mail provides students with direct access to the instructor. Through attachments, instructors can also share with students a variety of course information, such as lecture notes, outlines, assignments, and speaking schedules.

Students are also able to communicate with each other concerning course-related issues and questions, and use this medium to conduct audience analysis. Thus, "students and professors located remotely from each other may successfully explore, experience, and better understand each other" (Bailey & Cotlar, 1994, p. 186). For example, distance and time barriers are broken because the walls of the traditional classroom are expanded. Moreover, all course information can be easily saved through computer files (McComb, 1994).

McComb (1994) also observed, CAI "inherently puts teachers and students on a more equal basis, because [unlike the traditional classroom setting,] all participants have equal access to and control of the . . . environment" (p. 165). Indeed, this type of interaction has implications for those who experience reticence or communication apprehension (see, Donovan, 1995). Furthermore, by using the computer, students interact with each other without focusing on cultural and gender cues. Bailey and Cotlar (1994) contended that "minority biases and gender barriers can be dissolved or at least minimized with electronic communication" (p. 191).

Thus, CAI may help some students feel more comfortable contributing to discussions. Those students who typically remain silent during class sessions or who engage in minimal participation may increase their interactions with the instructor and their classmates, thereby developing more positive attitudes concerning work and learning (Logan, 1995).

Self-Paced Software

Instructional technology involves new methods, materials, and some equipment. Before the advent of computer technology, instructors shared course information through a variety of audio-visual equipment, such as public address systems, record players, tape recorders, projection devices, still transparencies, opaque material, and televisions and VCRs. Computer technology provides additional options. One technique includes packaging material relevant to a basic course concept or concepts together in the form of instructional software (Buckrop, 1997). Rather than relying on the traditional lecture approach, instructors present basic course information via computer software. Students engage in "individual exploration" (Oblinger & Rush, 1997) in class, at home, or in computer laboratories with access to the information. This software can be basic, focusing on presenting key course concepts, or interactive, allowing student to review course concepts by selecting the answers to various questions, such as audience analysis or problem solving.

Presentational Software

Another instructional option for basic course instructors involves graphic presentational software. This software allows both instructors and students to create presentations at home or in the computer laboratory and to share information during class sessions. Instructors can present public speaking theory through graphic images, clipart, drawings, and sound bites or auditory aids. Instructors can also introduce students to or reinforce theories of public speaking using this technology. Specifically, as students create media presentations to enhance their speech content, they can discover the mechanics of introducing, developing, and concluding a speech. Moreover, while using the software to share speech outlines, main points, or visual aids during class presentations, students provide their classmates with multiple examples of theory in practice (Bodary, 1997).

VIDEO TECHNOLOGY

Over the years, using video has been popular in basic public speaking courses. Instructors have used video to provide feedback, teach through example, and allow students to incorporate video clips as visual aids during their speech performance (Reppert, 1995). However, video has been used primarily to allow students to view their presentations thus gaining a clearer understanding of instructor feedback.

Studies have examined video's effectiveness in improving public speeches. For example, Frandsen, Larson, and Knapp (1967) contended that students agree with the instructor's critique when they receive instructor comments after reviewing their videotaped speeches.

McCroskey and Lashbrook (1970) discovered that the use of videotape combined with instructor feedback helps students meet course goals better than using video without criticism or receiving criticism without the use of video. Research has also examined if self-directed viewing by students of their own videotaped speeches has a significant effect on their reported level of communication competence and apprehension (Hinton & Kramer, 1998). One conclusion drawn from this study indicated that "the self-directed use of videotaped feedback helps those who view themselves with the lowest level of competency to gain the most confidence" (p. 160).

Instructors who use video as a teaching tool may succeed at: (1) helping students focus attention on details, especially sequence of events; (2) improving cognitive learning; (3) increasing affective learning, and (4) decreasing levels of communication apprehension, (Fisher, 1997; Hinton & Kramer, 1998; Jensen, 1997; Lamoureaux, 1997). Thus, data indicate that videotape can have a positive impact on the student's perceptions of speech content and the oral communication process.

Computers and Video

Computer technology has now made it possible to combine computers with video. Russell (1993) reported that "[w]ith the aid of the computer, an instructor can develop theory-based comments. Comments can be written on an interpersonal level that address the strengths and weaknesses of an observable skill with recommendations for improvement" (p. 4). Russell also indicated that although several studies have "investigated computer-managed instruction and feedback in speech performance . . . . [n]one have investigated whether com-

puterized feedback improves student speaking performance to a greater extent than does the traditional handwritten method" (p. 4). Thus the purpose of this 1993 study is to address the effect of computer-generated instructional feedback and videotape as compared to handwritten feedback on public speaking performance. In this study, students were evaluated on "total" speech performance and on organization, development, style, vocal quality, and gestural quality. Russell (1993) reported that "the treatments used . . . were effective in improving speech skill performance" (p. 14). Furthermore, although one conclusion of this study is that there was no significant difference between computer-generated and handwritten treatment groups on their "total" speech performance, Russell contended that computer-generated feedback benefits students as much or more than the handwritten method. Moreover, computer-generated feedback "provides a more manageable, consistent, and efficient method for delivering theory based feedback" (p. 16).

Interactive Video Instruction

Interactive Video Instruction (IVI) uses modules to share basic public speaking theory. Students interact by way of a computer with a combination of "video textural" information, such as videotape, video disk, film, slide, and graphic material. Students view modules, such as constructing conventional and speaking outlines, organizing ideas, using supporting materials, improving listening skills, developing introductions and conclusions, and managing speech fright, and respond to them. Based on the students' response, the appropriate medium or media are provided (Cronin, 1994; Cronin, Grice, & Olsen, 1994; Cronin & Kennan, 1994). The

primary purpose of IVI is to move "cognitive instruction from the classroom into a self-paced learning laboratory" (Cronin & Kennan, 1994, p. 1).

Another purpose of IVI is to respond to the lack of sufficient basic course class time. Gibson, Hanna, and Huddleston (1985) reported that, although basic course instructors are generally satisfied with course content and approach, they list inadequate time to cover course content as one of their primary concerns. Further, Mino and Butler (1995) contended that few basic course instructors spend adequate time developing students' performance skills. Using IVI allows students to learn and practice the skills that are essential to classroom performances thus allowing more time for performance, feedback, evaluation, and discussion (Cronin & Kennan, 1994).

Cronin and Kennan (1994) believed that IVI can expand instructional opportunities and can provide oral communication training in contexts that are not available in traditional instructional settings. Moreover, these authors report that IVI "may be relevant to public speaking instruction" (p. 5). They provide three conclusions to support this contention: (1) IVI appears to result in increased learning over linear video instruction; (2) students react positively to IVI; and (3) through IVI, cognitive learning is enhanced. In addition, among its many other advantages, IVI can be adapted to the instructor's individual needs. Further, instructors who miss class can assign students to use IVI in their absence. Students who are absent can use IVI to help them with missed materials. Moreover, most large lecture classes in public speaking can be supplemented through IVI.

CHALLENGES

Although technology has the potential to provide instructional advantages, challenges also exist. These include cost, training, and outcomes. In 1994, higher education spent 6 billion dollars on technology (Geoghagen, 1995). Certainly this figure has increased significantly since that time. Thus, the first challenge for basic public speaking instructors is a financial one. Although instructors can educate themselves, assisting faculty to integrate technology into instruction and providing adequate support are crucial (Guernesy, 1997b). Too often, instructors' attempts to integrate technology into their classroom without the appropriate training results in focusing on the technology first. Thus, student learning needs become a secondary consideration. As Sell (1996) suggested, successful technological applications must begin with the goal of adapting the technology to the learners rather than adapting learning to the technology.

In order to accomplish this task, it is necessary to provide workshops, seminars, demonstrations, and travel resources that allow faculty opportunities to examine and exchange viewpoints concerning technology. Moreover, time and support are needed for faculty to evaluate their current teaching approaches and to develop new instructional approaches that adapt technology to student learning needs. In addition, quality technical support for courses that include technology must be provided. Thus, obtaining funding to "wire" a college or university to provide electronic mail, self-paced and graphic presentational software, and video-computer capacity for Interactive Video Instruction, and training instructors to use each effectively become primary considerations.

At the same time, students should be technologically competent. The number of institutions that require students to demonstrate basic computer skills has climbed to more than 40% (Guernesy, 1997b). However, public speaking course instructors cannot assume that students who enroll in their classes are technologically literate. Unless the institution requires students to pass a test before issuing an e-mail account or insists that students successfully complete courses centering on technological applications before enrolling in courses that require technological competence, the instructor who wants to use technology must schedule the time and have the personnel to train students to use that technology.

Requiring that students use the technology effectively for any course is a challenge. Students may be uncomfortable about or unwilling to use the technology. They may have a difficult time accessing computer laboratories which, at most colleges or universities, are open at specific hours based more on institutional convenience rather than student need. Moreover, the idea that requiring students to use technology effectively will result in additional learning can be countered by the "paralysis by overload" theory (Sell, 1996) where more information to process may result in less learning.

In addition to financial and training considerations, the amount of time it takes for instructors and students to use the technology effectively creates an additional challenge. Instructors who share course information via computer must invest significant time inputting and updating this information. Instructors and students who engage in communication through electronic mail must send and respond to messages consistently. Further, instructors must monitor the computer laboratory frequently to ensure that all equipment is operating as it should. Students must spend additional out-of-class

time working on course assignments, particularly if they are unfamiliar with the technology. Moreover, enthusiastic students may overload the electronic mailboxes of their instructors and their classmates by dominating e-mail conversations, or may monopolize computer equipment.

Another challenge is interpreting the results of studies that test the effectiveness of various technologies. For example, although Hinton and Kramer's (1998) study reported that self- directed video tape benefits students in some settings, it has a limited impact on "student reports of their communication competence and apprehension across settings" (p. 160). Therefore, these authors believed that further examination of video technology is necessary. Further, even though Russell (1993) believed that computer-generated feedback may be more effective than handwritten feedback, he also contends that more research needs to be conducted "to determine the efficiency of the method" (p. 17). Because research findings generally produce mixed results, basic course instructors should clearly define their instructional goals and carefully consider a variety of scholarly perspectives before incorporating technology into the basic course classroom.

The greatest challenge, however, involves how to use technology most effectively while teaching the basic public speaking course, a course designed to help students practice, evaluate, and improve their oral communication skills. Effective oral communication requires understanding fully and incorporating effectively both the verbal *and* the nonverbal within a communication context. Technology, particularly electronic mail, does not allow students to assess or respond to nonverbal cues which are a critical aspect of oral communication. In addition, multimedia presentations or interactive video may shift students' attention to the

power of the electronic media rather than the power of face-to-face explanation and interaction. After extensively examining the features of oral, literate, and electronic cultures, Chesebro and Bertelsen (1996) concluded that "public speaking courses should fall within the domain of an oral culture, with the focus of these courses directed toward teaching students how to function within a context in which verbal and nonverbal dimensions merge speaker, audience, and cultural system into a single, seamless, and cohesive social unity" (p. 171).

The challenge, then, becomes adapting technology to improve students' understanding of skills used in an oral context. Literacy certainly plays an important role in the development of oral communication skills. Through reading assignments, students are provided with information that helps them prepare to deliver their speeches. Thus, for those engaged by technology, the assumption may be that technology, like literacy, must play a role in delivering basic public speaking instruction. However, Ely (1995) warned, "when technology makes it possible for people to do something, people do it, not always because it is necessary but because it is possible" (p. 2).

The communication discipline, however, has not engaged in extensive research into the uses and effectiveness of various technologies. For example, Kuehn (1994) asserted that "communication specialists . . . have not yet demonstrated the vigor of other disciplines when it comes to research in computerized instruction" (p. 171). The communication discipline's primary focus is human communication in a variety of oral contexts. Because of this focus, our discipline must examine, more thoroughly than most, its research direction concerning the application of technology and, at the same time, focus primarily on the development of effective oral communi-

cation skills. Moreover, because research reporting technology's role and application in improving basic course instruction is limited or has produced mixed results, instructors should continue to explore under what conditions and in which contexts technology is most effective in delivering the basic public speaking course, assess the possibilities of using the technology effectively, address the challenges, and, subsequently, define that technology's role.

Thus far, it appears one of the major roles of technology in the basic course may lie in its capacity to share theory in a format other than the traditional lecture. In fact, because the lecture requires class time that could be used by students to practice, evaluate, and improve their oral communication skills, this format is perceived by some communication educators as an ineffective method of delivering basic course instruction (Cronin & Glenn, 1991; Cronin & Kennan, 1994; Mino & Butler, 1995). However, additional research is needed to support this contention.

Thus, before using technology blindly, a primary challenge for basic course instructors is to define effective uses of technology while still maintaining the integrity of beginning public speaking instruction. In other words, "technology should not be avoided" rather instructors should "constantly assess their effectiveness and adapt [technology] to the changing needs of the students" (Hugenberg & Yoder, 1991, pp. 276-277). In order to accomplish this goal, instructors should need to view the implementation of technology as a process of exploration and discovery.

THE EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY PROCESS

Based on the opportunities and challenges provided by various electronic media, educators have asked many significant questions concerning the effective implementation of technology in the academic setting. However, the communication discipline has only recently begun to explore the role of technology and its impact on oral communication instruction. Specifically, one of the goals of the National Communication Association (NCA) is to assist its members as they use technology in the communication classroom. In order to accomplish this task, NCA has assembled a Task Force whose charge is to explore the uses of technology in the communication classroom and has conducted a pilot survey focusing on the application of "educational technology" (National Communication Association, 1998, p. 5).

NCA's Task Force represented the first stage in an exploration and discovery process that is necessary to define technology's role in the communication classroom. Researchers who study technology in the academic setting imply that educators need to explore several stages and ask a variety of questions before implementing and defining the effectiveness of technology in the classroom (see, for example, Dryli, 1994; Elmer-DeWitt, 1991; Wagner, Heye, & Tsai, 1996).

Because the implementation of technology in the communication classroom has yet to be examined extensively, one exploration and discovery process for basic course instructors may be particularly relevant. This process includes three stages: (1) a preliminary stage; (2) an implementation stage; and (3) an assessment stage. These stages and the questions associated with each may help instructors who want to use technology

as an instructional tool assess the technological capabilities of their institutions, evaluate their teaching proficiency, and define their instructional goals.

The Preliminary State

The preliminary stage involves exploring the possibilities of using technology as a means of instruction. This stage includes assessing the technological capabilities of the institution and determining costs.

Assessing Technologlcal Capabilities. The instructor who is interested in implementing technology should discover the types of technology that are available at his or her institution. In other words, does the institution provide the instructional resources that are necessary for alternate forms of teaching? For example, is the institution "wired" for technology? What type of technologies are available? Are there classrooms that are designed specifically for the use of various technologies? Do regular classrooms have technological capabilities? If not, could computer laboratories serve as classrooms? How many students do the facilities accommodate? Moreover, if the institution has access to technology, what is the quality of the instructional materials and programs that have been delivered through technological means?

Another factor to consider is the quality of the technological support that is available at the institution. For example, what type of technological support staff is available? At some institutions, there is a main computer or technology center with a director and support staff who are responsible for helping faculty implement technology; at other institutions technological support staff is limited or unavailable. If support staff are avail-

able, how technologically proficient are they? Do these staff members train instructors and students in technological applications? How effective are these staff members when training instructors or students to use the available technology? Before technology can be effectively incorporated into the classroom, the instructor must be proficient in using it.

Another important consideration is student knowledge. If the students do not possess technological skills, does the instructor have sufficient time to teach students to use the technology effectively, to incorporate the technology into instruction efficaciously, and still have time to cover the appropriate course material? (see, for example, Pallas, 1986). In other words, is the activity worth doing through technology if the technology requires a focus on learning how to use the technology rather than enhancing instruction? As Niemi and Gooler (1987) observed, "unless the learner is comfortable with the technology there is little likelihood that he or she will be able to take full advantage of [it]" (p. 107).

Determining Costs. Administrators of institutions that have technological capabilities must be willing to provide faculty members with the funding, the time, and the freedom to assess current methods of instruction and develop new instructional approaches that adapt technology to student learning needs (Elmer-DeWitt, 1991; Sell, 1996). Therefore, the instructor must discover if training programs, release time, sabbatical leaves, or institutional grants are available to design an instructional unit or units using specific technology.

If the institution does not have access to the technology or provides little or no support, instructors must determine the costs and discover methods of funding both the technology used and the training involved. For

example, creating interactive video software to present theory can be expensive and time consuming. Cronin and Kennan (1994) described the initial cost of and time involved in creating Interactive Video Instruction modules. They reported:

> [t]wo grants from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia totaling over $400,000, combined with support from Radford University, enabled the development of the IVI modules . . . . The average development time for each of these modules was 1,200 hours. The design team included a producer, content experts, a graphic artist, a computer programmer, and a video producer. (p. 7)

Cronin and Kennan (1994) also provided the least expensive hardware necessary for implementing Interactive Video Instruction (pp. 10-11).

Although instructors' goals for implementing technology may be more basic, discovering the cost, the time involved, the institutional support provided for creating an instruction unit or units via technology, and planning additional funding and time to update the instructional materials are necessary before beginning a specific project.

The Implementation Stage

The implementation stage includes providing an appropriate instructional rationale and purpose for using the technology as an instructional tool.

Rationale. Dryli (1994) contended "even though applications of emerging technology defy categorization, it is useful to think of today's technology applications as originally applied to the computer when it first entered

schools: as an object of instruction, as a delivery medium for instruction or as an instructional tool" (p. 38).

Before implementing technology into the basic course the instructor must assess whether or not incorporating technology has the potential to improve, in any significant way, students' understanding or mastery of effective oral communication skills. Thus, the instructor should ask, in which content or skills development areas would students profit most when applying technology? Another important question is, can a given task or activity be done equally well using non-technical methods, such as handouts or activity sheets? Mergendoller (1997) considered the difference between "eyes-on and minds-on learning" (p. 13). He argues that "paying attention is not the same as learning . . . it is the teacher, not the media, that is fundamental in [the learning] process" (p. 13). Moreover, as Dryli (1994) observed, "[n]ew technology that mimics old technology -- films that look like 'stage plays,' educational television programming that rely on 'talking heads,' computer screens that resemble book pages is not often the best option for your classroom. Nor is software developed for one kind of computer and simply 'ported over' to a more powerful computer platform" (p. 39).

Another factor to consider involves technological problems. Technology that does not work as one expects or continually malfunctions takes the students' attention away from the task, activity, or conceptual information. Moreover, technology that is incorporated effectively at certain institutions or in certain academic contexts may fail in others.

Purpose. Those who want to use technology should explore their purpose for using the technology. Thus, instructors should assess their level of content

knowledge and consider their instructional experience. Often enthusiastic instructors at the beginning stages of their careers or those who are new to basic course instruction implement technology simply because it is available or they are encouraged to do so. Effective technological applications require that the instructor adapt the technology to the students' learning needs. More experienced instructors may implement technology more effectively because they may be more able to determine if technology best serves students' oral communication needs. Furthermore, experienced instructors may be able to better assess if there may be more effective approaches for delivering content or developing skills through technology than there are through conventional instructional approaches.

Moreover, because the basic public speaking course requires face-to-face communication with students, an important question that instructors need to ask is: does the technology save time that can be used for additional instructor/student interaction? At a recent National Communication Association convention, an instructor, whose presentation focused on using computer software to present basic course theory, exclaimed that this technology had provided her with a total of seven additional hours of basic course class time. When asked how she used this time, she replied, "training the graduate assistants to teach the basic course." Clearly, in this case, the technology did not best serve the needs of the undergraduate students who missed the opportunity to spend seven hours on skills development and evaluation.

Another consideration for instructors is the level of success they experience in the basic public speaking course. Instructors should evaluate the effectiveness of current teaching methods by defining existing strengths and improving weaknesses before considering using

technology in the classroom. As Richmond (1998) observed, weaknesses in instruction cannot be hidden or improved through technology.

The Assessment Stage

The assessment stage not only involves evaluating the effectiveness of technology in improving student performance in the basic course classroom but it also includes sharing this information in clear and meaningful ways.

Evaluating Effectiveness. Ely (1995) believed that because "[i]mmediate feedback, instant gratification, and confirmation without delay are the order of the day . . . it is natural, therefore, that we should turn to technology to answer the questions and solve the problems of teaching and learning . . . (p. 12). However, as Mergendoller (1997) argued, although technology "expedites our ability to access, share, manipulate, and display information, it provides little or no guidance regarding the quality, relevance, or timeliness of the information it processes. Teachers must take this responsibility . . ." (p. 14).

Thus, after implementing technology, instructors should answer carefully several questions concerning the quality and effectiveness of the technology used. For example, based on instructional goals, what is the relevance of using the technology? How is the instructional quality of the technological application assessed? What improvements need to be made? Does technology have a significant effect on students' understanding or mastery of oral communication skills? For what specific skills, content areas, and educational levels does technology seem most effective? Which types of students seem to

profit most from using technology? Does technology improve students' attitudes toward basic course instruction? Will improved attitudes translate into better performance in other oral communication contexts? Answering these types of questions may provide instructors with some direction concerning the use of technology in the basic public speaking course. Subsequently, by sharing this information, the communication discipline may develop a clearer understanding of the role of technology in the communication classroom.

Sharing Information. Much of the literature presented in this essay provides some support for considering the implementation of technology in the basic course classroom. However, a majority of these essays focus their attention on providing descriptions of technology's advantages or disadvantages or focus primarily on the subjects, methods, and findings of empirical studies. Few present answers to questions concerning the type of training needed, the specific equipment used, or the cost of each.

In order to discover the role of technology in the basic course, communication researchers need to clearly specify the equipment needed, the training needed, and the estimated costs. This information will help instructors located at other institutions assess the possibilities of using the technology in similar ways. In other words, understanding researchers' successes when implementing technology is of limited use if those at other instructional locations cannot duplicate these successes. Therefore, when examining the role of technology in the communication classroom, educators should also consider questions of access and equity. Specifically, "to whom will technologies be accessible?" and "will technologies expand the gulf between those who have and those who have not?" (Niemi & Gooler, 1987, p. 105).

CONCLUSION

Instructors who want to incorporate technology while delivering the beginning public speaking course must focus, first, on student needs. Students who enroll in the basic communication course expect to participate in a learning environment that fosters a measurable improvement in their oral communication skills development not just during college but throughout their personal and professional lives. Because the basic public speaking course is, for most students, the first and only contact they have with the communication discipline (Hess & Pearson, 1992) and the only opportunity they have for mastering oral communication (Cronin & Glenn, 1991; Mino & Butler, 1995), the primary goal must focus on increasing understanding of and improving communication in oral contexts. Although technology is an important part of our instructional arsenal, it does not automatically lead to more critical thinking, a richer understanding, or improved student performances. As Sell (1996) noted, opportunities provided by new technologies, such as electronic mail, presentational software, and multimedia presentations "require considerable reflection and debate as to whether, and under which conditions, they will enhance the quality of learning and teaching" (p. 1).

Until the communication discipline addresses thoroughly the effective implementation and role of technology in the beginning public speaking course, and until institutions agree to provide the necessary support for effective implementation of electronic media, technology may become an ineffective add-on to traditional instruction, a method that leads away from rather than toward course goals and objectives, or a means by which

to entertain rather than educate. Thus, the communication discipline must extensively examine and clearly define the role of technology in the basic course so the dazzling promise does not blind us.

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Communication Apprehension, Self-Efficacy, and Grades in the Basic Course: Correlations and Implications

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The debilitating effects of communication apprehension (CA) have been well established in the communication literature and consequently, basic communication course instructors have long been concerned with helping students manage apprehension and escape the negative consequences. By investigating the factors that influence CA, researchers have been able to suggest teaching strategies and interventions to help students manage communication anxiety. Two of these factors that have received considerable investigation include grades and self-esteem. Recently, communication research has suggested that self-efficacy (S-E), one particular dimension of self-esteem, is more closely related to CA than self-worth and therefore, the CA/S-E relationship should receive further investigation because of the implications it would have on instructional interventions (Colby, Hopf, & Ayres, 1993; Hopf & Colby, 1992).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between CA and S-E in a basic public speaking course. In addition, since some studies have shown that high CAs are at a grade disadvantage in a traditional public speaking course, this investigation sought to determine if CA or S-E are predictive of grade.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication Apprehension and Self-efficacy

Communication Apprehension. Several personality variables have been associated with CA. Positive correlates with CA include loneliness, public self-consciousness, touch avoidance, situational anxiety, writing apprehension, alienation, and fear of negative evaluation (Andersen & Leibowitz, 1976; Bell & Daly, 1983a; Burgoon, 1976; Cheek & Buss, 1981; Daly & Stafford, 1984; Daly, Caughlin, & Stafford (in press): Jones & Russell, 1982). Negative correlates with CA include level of individualization, tendency to self-disclose, self-monitoring, innovativeness, argumentativeness, assertiveness, social responsiveness, self-control, adventurousness, dominance, nurturance, affiliation, attentiveness, and socialization (Bell & Daly, 1983b; Briggs, Cheek, & Buss, 1980; Hunt & Joseph, 1975; Infante & Rancer, 1982; McCroskey, Daly, & Sorensen, 1976; Miller, Berg, & Archer, 1983; Richmond, 1980; Rosenfeld & Plax, 1976).

Numerous studies have found negative correlations between CA and self-esteem (Cheek & Buss, 1981; Comrey, 1973; Jones & Russell, 1982; Leary, 1983; Lustig, 1974; McCroskey & Richmond, 1975; McCroskey, Richmond, Daly & Falcione, 1977). Specific dimensions of self-esteem, studied in relationship to CA, include intelligence and self-sufficiency (McCroskey & Sorensen, 1976). Although self-sufficiency and intelligence have not been associated with CA, educational achievement on ACT tests, college grade-point averages, and grades in a course where communication is required have been associated with CA (Allen, 1984; Bourhis & Allen, 1992; Hurt, Priess & Davis, 1976; McCroskey & Andersen,

1976; McCroskey & Daly, 1976; McCroskey & Leppard, 1975; Powers & Smythe, 1980; Richmond, 1984; Richmond, 1997). A few recent studies have examined self-efficacy (S-E), another important dimension of self-esteem, and its inverse relationship with CA in interpersonal interactions (Colby, Hopf, and Ayres, 1993; Hopf & Colby, 1992). However, few studies, if any, have queried the relationship between CA and the S-E dimension of self-esteem in the context of a beginning public speaking course.

Self-Efficacy. S-E has been defined as the belief in one's ability to "organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). It involves a conviction about being able to use skills, and thus, influences an individual's cognitions, self-esteem, goal selection, and effort expended toward goal attainment (Bandura, 1977).

The theory of S-E has been examined extensively in educational settings and has been found to influence learning, motivation, and achievement. A wide range of studies have shown significant and positive associations between S-E for learning (assessed prior to instruction) and subsequent task motivation (range of r=.38 to .42; Schunk & Hanson, 1985; Schunk, Hanson, & Cox, 1987), and between S-E for learning judgments and posttest S-E and skill acquisition (range of r=.46 to .90; Schunk, 1989). In general, when compared with students who doubt their learning skills, students with high S-E for accomplishing a task or attaining a performance "participate more readily, work harder, and persist longer when they encounter difficulties" (Schunk, 1995, p. 282).

A meta-analysis of various research studies involving the relationship between S-E and academic outcomes reported that S-E beliefs are predictors of performance and persistence across numerous situations

(Multon, Brown, and Lent, 1991). In higher education, several studies have revealed that S-E is a predictor or has an influence on the academic achievement (i.e., higher grades) and the persistence of college students (Brown, Lent, & Larkin, 1989; Hackett, Betz, Casas, & Rocha-Sing, 1992; Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1987; Lent, Lopez, & Bieschke, 1993; Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1984; Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1986). However, most of these studies involved respondents who were students with declared engineering majors or situations where outcomes in math or science courses were queried. The influence of S-E in a beginning public speaking course has received little, if any, investigation.

Communication Apprehension and Self-efficacy. Hopf and Colby (1992) found that interpersonal CA "was more closely related to feelings about one's abilities to accomplish goals (S-E) than it is to feelings of self-worth" (p. 133). They called for further study into the relationship between S-E and the other CA contexts (e.g., public speaking). Colby, Hopf, and Ayres (1993) indicated that S-E in interpersonal relationships "was more closely related to CA than self-worth" and in fact "self-worth was not even significantly related to CA" (p. 226). They, too, called for further research involving the CA and S-E relationship because instructional interventions for CA that help increase high CAs' feelings of personal efficacy could contribute most effectively and efficiently to anxiety reduction.

Based upon the results of the CA-self-esteem studies, the CA-S-E studies, and the CA-grades studies, the following two hypotheses were formulated:

H1 There is a negative relationship between trait CA and S-E.

H2 There is a negative relationship between the contexts of CA and S-E.

Academic Success, Communication Apprehension, and Self-efficacy

Several communication studies have pointed out that high CAs suffer academically with lower grades and lower evaluations (Allen, 1984; Hurt & Preiss, 1978; McCroskey, 1977; Powers & Smythe, 1980; Richmond & McCroskey, 1995). For example, McCroskey, Booth-Butterfield, and Payne (1989) reported high CAs achieved lower GPAs and were more likely to drop out of school than moderate or low CAs. Rubin, Graham, and Mignerey (1990) confirmed that high CAs were likely to drop out of college or else they become less apprehensive during their four years in college. Ericson and Gardner (1992) also reported that high CAs were more likely to drop out of college, but they did not find that high CAs had lower GPAs. Using a meta-analysis of 23 empirical studies, Bourhis and Allen (1992) found a significant inverse relationship between CA and cognitive performance ($r = -.12$).

The relationship between S-E and academic achievement has been well established. Lent, Brown, and Larkin (1984) reported that S-E "contributed significant unique variance to the prediction of grades" (p. 165). Ferrari and Parker (1992) found that individuals with high S-E performed well in college and that S-E served as a predictor of academic performance. These same conclusions were supported by other studies using subjects in fields ranging from psychology to computer science (Mitchell, Hopper, Daniels, George-Falvy, & James, 1994; Wilhite, 1990).

Many of the studies that examined the effects of CA on academic achievement did not also examine S-E. Since S-E has been related to CA, this variable could have as much effect on grade as CA has been shown to

have on grade. Consequently the following hypotheses were formulated:

H3 There is a negative relationship between CA and final grade in a public speaking course.
H4 There is a positive relationship between S-E and final grade in a public speaking course.
H5 CA and S-E predict final grade.

Communication Apprehension and Demographics

A meta-analysis of twenty-three empirical studies reveals correlations between CA and GPA and between CA and student age (Boorhis & Allen, 1992). However, recent studies reveal no relationship between CA and GPA (Ericson & Gardner, 1992). Consequently, one additional demographic hypothesis was posed:

H6 There is a relationship between demographics (age, sex, grade-point average (GPA), or year in college) and CA.

METHODOLOGY

Respondents

Respondents for this study were 208 undergraduate students (104 females, 104 males) enrolled in 16 randomly-selected sections of a beginning public speaking course. Originally, 255 students agreed to participate in the study, but 47 of these students dropped out of the course. Their scores on the scales at Time 1 did not differ significantly from the remaining 208. Respondents represented a cross-section of class rankings (118

freshmen, 52 sophomores, 28 juniors, 8 seniors, 2 graduate) and disciplines because the course fulfills a university-wide general education requirement for public speaking. The age of the students ranged from 17 to 47 with a mean of 22 and a median of 20.

Questionnaires were administered during regular class time in the first week of the 1996 spring semester (Time 1), at the mid-point in the semester (Time 2), and in the final week of the semester (Time 3). Instructors read a script that invited students to participate in a research project, ongoing throughout the semester, that could ultimately help instructors improve instruction in the basic course. Participation was voluntary and students were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

Measurement Instruments

Communication Apprehension. CA was measured using the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) (McCroskey, 1982). This 24-item scale assesses trait (overall) communication anxiety, as well as anxiety across four contexts (groups, meetings, interpersonal, public speaking). It uses a five-point Likert type format and has demonstrated excellent reliability and predictive validity in its wide use in CA research (McCroskey, 1978 & 1984; Richmond & McCroskey, 1995). The obtained reliability coefficients (Cronbach alphas) for the overall (trait) scale used in this study were (for Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3, respectively) .95, .94, and .95. The reliabilities for the context scales were (for Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3, respectively): groups, .90, .89, .88; meetings, .90, .89, .92; interpersonal, .88, .86, .88; and public speaking, .89, .85, .87.

Self-efficacy in Class. Self-efficacy in the beginning public speaking course was measured by the Self-Efficacy in Class scale (SECL) from Pintrich and DeGroot's (1990) "Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire." The nine-question scale assesses perceived competence and confidence in performance of class work (e.g., "Compared with others in the class, I expect to do well," "I'm certain I can understand the ideas taught in the class," "Compared with others in the class, I think I know a great deal about public speaking," "I am sure that I can do an excellent job on the speeches and tasks assigned for this class"). The original questionnaire used a 7-point Likert scale, but for this study, a five-point Likert type format was used (1=strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree). Since Bandura's (1986) contentions that judgments of S-E are task specific and that S-E measures must be tailored to the task assessed have been supported by subsequent research, the verbiage was modified slightly to specifically relate to a public speaking class (e.g., "I am sure that I can do an excellent job on the problems and tasks assigned for this class" was changed to "I am sure that I can do an excellent job on the speeches and tasks assigned for this class"). Pintrich and DeGroot (1990) reported an internal reliability of .89. The obtained reliability coefficients for the SECL scale used in this study were .86 for Time 1, .87 for Time 2 and .87 for Time 3.

Self-efficacy in College. Self-efficacy in college was measured by two researcher-designed questions regarding perception of completing college work in general (i.e., "I am confident in my skills and abilities to complete college classes," "I am confident in my skills and abilities to graduate from college"). The reliabilities for the Self-Efficacy in College scale (Secol) were .87 for Time 1, .87 for Time 2, and .85 for Time 3.

Grades. Students' final grades in the course were obtained from the departmental records and the instructors who taught the classes. The records showed that 59 (28.4%) received an "A," 41 (19.7%) received a "B+," 48 (23.1%) received a "B," 21 (10.1%) received a "C+," 25 (12.0%) received a "C," 5 (2.4%) received a "D+," 4 (1.9%) received a "D," 2 (1.0%) received a "F," and 3 (1.4%) received an "Incomplete."

RESULTS

The first hypothesis, which predicted that there would be a relationship between trait CA and S-E, was tested by repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Pearson product-moment correlations. The hypothesis was supported.

Trait CA scores can range from 24 to 120. The obtained means for the scales were (for Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3, respectively): 66.1, 62.0, 57.2 (SD, 16.7, 15.5, 17.3). The ANOVA showed that there was a significant difference in mean scores between Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3 ($F=79.24$; $p=.00$). Post hoc tests showed significant differences existed between all means at all three times.

SECL scores can range from 9 to 45. The obtained means for the scales were (for Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3, respectively): 33.6, 34.7, 35.6 (SD, 4.7, 4.9, 5.0). The ANOVA showed that there was a significant difference between mean scores. Post hoc tests showed significant differences existed between Time 1 and Time 2 and between Time 1 and Time 3.

SECOL scores can range from 2 to 10. The obtained means for the scales were (for Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3, respectively): 8.5, 8.5, 8.5 (SD, 1.3, 1.4, 1.4). The ANOVA showed that there were NO significant differ-

ences in mean scores between Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3.

Pearson product-moment correlations revealed that trait CA correlates with S-E in Class at Time 1 (r= -.57, p <.01), Time 2 (r= -.46, p <.01), and Time 3 (r= -.47, p <.01). In addition, Trait CA correlates with S-E in college at Time 1 (r= -.35, p <.01), Time 2 (r= -.29, p <.01), and Time 3 (r= -.35, p <.01).

The second hypothesis predicted a relationship between the PRCA subscales (group discussions, meetings, interpersonal conversations, public speaking) of the PRCA-24 and S-E. Again, the hypothesis was supported. Each of the PRCA subscales can range from 6 to 30. The obtained means for the scales were (for Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3, respectively): CA groups, 15.2, 13.7, 13.3 (SD, 5.0, 4.7, 4.9); CA meetings, 16.2, 15.5, 14.1 (SD, 5.0, 4.8, 5.3; CA interpersonal, 15.0, 13.9, 13.3 (4.4, 4.3, 4.6); CA public speaking, 19.6, 18.7, 16.6 (SD, 5.2, 5.0, 5.2). ANOVAs showed that there were significant differences between mean scores. Post Hoc tests revealed signifi-

Table 1
Pearson *r* Correlations between PRCA-24 CA Contexts and SECL

	SECL Time 1	SECL Time 2	SECL Time 3
Group Discussions	–.47**	–.32**	–.38**
Meetings	–.46**	–.34**	–.42**
Interpersonal Conversations	–.46**	–.39**	–.43**
Public Speaking	–.55**	–.47**	.40**
Trait CA	–.57**	–.46**	–.47**

* p < .05 ** p< .01

cant differences between Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3 for group discussions (F=29.82; p=.00); for meetings (F=39.28; p=.00); for interpersonal conversations (F=26.33; p=.00); and for public speaking (F= 62.79; p=.00). Post hoc tests showed significant differences existed between all means at all three times. Pearson product-moment correlations showed that CA in each of the four contexts correlates with S-E in Class (SECL) (see Table 1) and S-E in College (SECOL) (see Table 2).

Table 2
Pearson r Correlations Between PRCA-24 CA Contexts and SECOL

	SECOL Time 1	SECOL Time 2	SECOL Time 3
Group Discussions	–.33**	–.27**	–.31**
Meetings	–.28**	–.26**	–.28**
Interpersonal Conversations	–.32**	–.22**	–.32**
Public Speaking	–.26**	–.20**	.30**
Trait CA	–.35**	–.29**	–.35**

* p < .05 ** p< .01

The third hypothesis predicted a relationship between CA and final grade in the public speaking course. This hypothesis was not supported. The Trait CA scores and the Context CA scores were not significantly correlated with grade in the public speaking course at Time 1, Time 2, or Time 3.

The fourth hypothesis predicted a relationship between S-E and final grade in the public speaking course. This hypothesis was supported. Pearson product-mo-

ment correlations revealed that S-E in class and S-E in college correlate with final grade at all three times of data collection. The strongest correlations were found at Times 2 and 3 (see Table 3).

Table 3
Pearson *r* Correlations Between Final Grade and SECL and SECOL

	Grade (Time 1)	Grade (Time 2)	Grade (Time 3)
SECL	.14*	.35**	.50**
SECOL	.17*	.29**	.32**

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

The fifth hypothesis predicted that CA and S-E would predict final grade in the public speaking course. The step-wise multiple regression equation for the trait CA, SECL, and SECOL revealed that only S-E for college at Time 1 predicted final grade, while S-E for class at Time 2 and Time 3 predicted final grade (see Tables 4 & 5). Trait CA did not enter into the equation at Time 1 and Time 2. At Time 3, trait CA accounted for only a minimal amount of the variance (see Table 6).

Table 4
Time 1: Hierarchical Regression Results

Variable	R	Rsq	F	P	Rsq ch
SECOL	.16	.03	5.48	.02	.03

Table 5
Time 2: Hierarchical Regression Results

Variable	R	Rsq	F	P	Rsq ch
SECL	.32	.10	23.03	.000	.10

Table 6
Time 3: Hierarchical RegressionResults

Variable	R	Rsq	F	P	Rsq ch
SECL	.49	.25	66.48	.000	.25
Trait CA	–.08	.28	39.09	.000	.03

The final hypothesis predicted that there would be a relationship between demographics (age, sex, GPA, or year in college) and CA. This hypothesis was not supported. Trait CA is NOT significantly correlated with age, sex, GPA, or year in college.

Additional Pearson product-moment correlations further revealed that S-E in class correlates with reported GPA at Time 1 ($r = .48$, $p < .01$), Time 2 ($r = .36$, $p < .01$), and Time 3 ($r = .27$, $p < .01$). S-E in college correlates with reported GPA at Time 1 ($r = .32$, $p < .01$), Time 2 ($r = .32$, $p < .01$), and Time 3 ($r = .32$, $p < .01$).

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that, as expected, there is a significant inverse relationship between trait CA and S-E throughout the semester in a basic public speaking course that fulfills a university-wide core cur-

riculum requirement. Students who reported higher trait CA also tended to report a lower S-E in class, as well as a lower S-E in college work in general.

The results of this study also indicate that there is a significant inverse relationship between CA contexts and S-E throughout the semester. Students who reported higher CA in the contexts of group discussions, meetings, interpersonal conversations, and public speaking also tended to report a lower S-E in class and a lower S-E in college, in general.

The results of this study found no relationship between trait CA and final grade or between context CA and final grade for students enrolled in a basic public speaking course. While these findings differed from those of a previous study that showed there was a relationship between final grade in a basic communication course and trait CA (Powers & Smythe, 1980), they supported more recent research which found that trait CA "could not predict final course grades" (Rubin, Rubin, & Jordan, 1995, p. 2). However, the present study found that trait CA reported at mid-semester (Time 2) and end of the semester (Time 3) modestly correlated with final grade in the course ($r = -.12$) which is consistent with the Boorhis and Allen (1992) meta-analysis findings.

This study also found no relationship between CA and demographic variables, including GPA. A previous meta-analysis of twenty-three empirical studies involving CA and cognitive performance has revealed that there is a small correlation ($r = -.12$) between CA and GPA (Bourhis & Allen, 1992). However, other recent studies have found no relationship between CA and GPA (Ericson & Gardner, 1992). Consequently, the present data support the finding of more recent studies.

However, the results of this investigation did find a significant positive correlation between S-E and grade

throughout the semester. The more students believed they had the ability necessary to achieve the goals and tasks of the public speaking class, the more they tended to earn a higher final grade. In fact S-E at mid semester and at the end of semester did contribute significant unique variance to the prediction of final grade.

These findings suggest issues that are important to classroom instruction in the basic course. Since at least 75% of all students report CA in the public speaking context and 15-20% report high trait CA (across all contexts) (McCroskey, 1977 & 1982; Richmond & McCroskey, 1995), instructors often seek instructional strategies and interventions to help students reduce CA levels. This study suggests that it may be more important to help students enrolled in a required beginning public speaking course increase their S-E beliefs that they possess the skills necessary to succeed in a public speaking course than to focus directly on reducing their public speaking anxiety. Since CA and S-E are related, CA will decrease as S-E increases.

This study also suggests that it is not S-E for class at the beginning of the term that predicts grade, but rather S-E at mid-term and end-of-term that predicts grade. Consequently, it may be prudent for instructors to develop learning strategies and interventions to help apprehensive individuals increase S-E before mid-semester in a public speaking course.

A few suggestions for instructional strategies that could increase S-E in the public speaking classroom include: 1) teaching a "communication orientation" instead of a "performance orientation," 2) showing several peer models of speeches to students, and 3) assigning several mini-speeches (all used very early in the course). One way of increasing students' S-E could include helping students view (via lecture or readings) public speaking from communication orientation instead of

performance orientation. According to Motley (1991 & 1995), a performance orientation views public speaking as a situation demanding a perfect, aesthetic impression, flawless oratorical skills or eloquence, and a formal, polished, brilliant delivery. On the other hand, the communication orientation views public speaking as a communication encounter that relies on the ordinary communication skills that people use in everyday conversation.

Motley (1991), reports significant reductions in anxiety levels when college students believe they already have the basic conversational skills necessary to deliver a speech. It may be that the communication orientation actually increases S-E which varies with CA. Helping students believe they have the basic skills necessary to become effective speakers does not negate the need for skills training in public speaking, but instead prepares students to learn by increasing their S-E and confidence in their ability to succeed in a class.

Research has established the benefits of peer modeling as an instructional strategy for increasing student S-E (Zimmerman & Ringle, 1981). For public speaking classes, this strategy could include the presentation of taped model speeches. Although most public speaking classes include critical analysis of speeches, peer model speeches can convey to students that they are capable of presenting a speech, and can motivate them to attempt giving a speech.

The S-E literature has shown that peer models increase S-E better than instructor models or no models (Schunk & Hanson, 1985; Schunk, Hanson, & Cox, 1987). Multiple models increase the likelihood that students will see themselves more capable than at least one of the models (Schunk, 1989). Therefore, showing at least three model speeches that are judged to be above-average, average, and below average could serve to in-

crease S-E, reduce CA, and increase the level of student performance.

Another instructional strategy that could increase S-E for public speaking students includes the assignment of ungraded mini-speeches (Dwyer, 1996 & 1997). Several one-minute structured speeches, "give students an opportunity to speak on a familiar topic, in a less conspicuous manner than in a formal public speaking situation, while becoming familiar with the audience, without being evaluated, and in a way that precludes failure and promotes success" (Dwyer, 1996, p. 2). Although, the mini-speeches were designed to reduce the situational aspects that heighten anxiety, they may also increase students' S-E. As Schunk (1989) pointed out, at the start of any new learning activity, students differ on their S-E for acquiring new skills or knowledge, but as they progress in the task, cues such as close-at-hand goal attainment and instructor feedback, provide them with a basis to assess S-E for further learning. Thus, mini-speeches help students practice the public speaking skills they have already acquired from everyday communication and provide cues for successful and immediate goal attainment. In turn, students could increase their S-E for future speaking assignments.

In this research report, S-E has been considered an independent variable in its effect on grades. However, level of S-E could also be considered a dependent variable in that grades and performances can raise or lower S-E for future tasks and courses (Schunk, 1989). Consequently, any instructional feedback, including grades, or strategies, including the three discussed here, that positively cue students on their performance and goal attainment can effect S-E as the dependent variable, which in turn can effect grade.

Future research should confirm the relationship between CA and S-E, as well as address instructional

methodologies that increase S-E. As Colby, Hopf, and Ayres (1993) have already recommended, restructuring interventions to enhance their impact on S-E may improve the ability of treatments to reduce CA. "Such a goal is desirable given the debilitating effects that CA can have on the personal and professional lives of those who suffer from it" (Colby, Hopf, and Ayres, 1993 p. 228).

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Branching Out to Meet the Needs Of Our Students: A Model For Oral Communication Assessment And Curriculum Programs

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Over the course of the last two decades, colleges and universities across the United States have been charged with the task of establishing courses in oral communication as an integral part of general education curricula. From the outset, communication educators have been aware that there are students in the American education system whose related abilities, for one reason or another, fall into skill and anxiety-related typologies ranging from remedial needs to those who possess advanced communication competencies. However, these same educators have had a difficult time assessing communication competence levels of students. In many cases, students who have specialized, skill-relevant needs have been thrust into classroom environments which have not been conducive to individual success.

Ironically, the post-secondary education community developed systems of assessment many years ago to evaluate students (for example, in the areas of mathematics, English and foreign languages) for the sole purpose of placing individuals into classes that fit their skill levels. It is no secret that as the global community is governed by greater levels of complexity, effective communication becomes an increasing prerequisite for

personal and professional success. Students require and deserve learning environments that will cultivate expected levels of communication skills. As the Wingspread Group on Higher Education so aptly contends, "An increasingly open, global economy requires — absolutely requires — that all of us be better educated, more skilled, more adaptable, and more capable of working collaboratively. Economic considerations alone mean that we must change the ways we teach and learn" (Brock 1993, p. 4).

There is increasing evidence to suggest that at-risk students (e.g., those who are challenged by academic deficits or social-anxiety constraints) are likely to drop out of high school and post-secondary institutions because specialized needs are not identified, and when they are identified, programs designed to meet the special needs of these populations have been scarce. According Chesebro, et al. (1992), "effective oral communication is likely to play a critical role in reversing the outcome predicted for at-risk students. In dealing with at-risk students, the educational mission cannot only be to achieve excellence; it also should be designed to attain inclusiveness."

Although insufficient data exist regarding the factors encouraging retention rates among high school and post-secondary institutions, a recent study published by Statistics Canada (1995) reports that more than 16.9% of students left school prematurely because they had problems speaking in front of a class and 10.9% claimed to be socially intimidated by teachers or peers. There is evidence to suggest there are measures we can and should be taking to encourage retention among our students. And yet, due to limited financial, personnel and temporal resources, appropriate assessment of the specialized needs of incoming students (e.g., levels of oral communication competencies and communication ap-

prehension) remains underdeveloped and often neglected.

Diverse publications focusing on the subject of assessing oral communication have surfaced in recent years (see for example Christ, 1994; Morreale & Backlund, 1996; Morreale et al., 1993) and there are institutions from community colleges to large universities which have made attempts to implement programs of this nature. In June 1996, after years of envisioning and planning, Western Carolina University implemented a program which responds to the call for oral communication assessment followed by the development of specialized courses designed to meet outcomes of the assessment process.

Screening the communication competencies of incoming students is only one dimension of a multi-faceted plan for encouraging increased levels of communication competence at Western Carolina University. For example, while other characteristics have been identified, few descriptions of the attitudes and skill levels of academically at-risk students regarding communication have been provided. In an effort to address this oversight, the purpose of this article is to provide a description of the oral communication assessment and course curriculum programs at Western Carolina. Additionally, in order to describe the development of these programs, a review of recent efforts to refocus the priorities of oral communication education, as an integral part of general education at this institution is included.

BACKGROUND

The General Education Program and Oral Communication

The modern era of Western Carolina University's general education program began in 1990 and since that time many developmental steps have taken place. General education at Western Carolina University requires students to take a total of 41 semester hours from ten areas of specialization: 16 hours from Foundations (which includes English, Math, Oral Communication, Computer Literacy and Leisure and Fitness) and 25 from Perspectives (which includes Social Sciences and Contemporary Institutions, Physical and Biological Sciences, The Humanistic Experience, Comparative Cultures and the Human Past). In the Foundations courses, "students receive instruction in basic subjects needed to succeed in subsequent courses or in such life skills as fitness, leisure and computer literacy" (General Education Booklet, 1996, p. 1). In the Perspectives courses, "students encounter subject matter in areas which the faculty has agreed must be understood by educated people at this time in history" (p. 1).

All of the courses in the General Education program require that certain criteria be met for satisfactory completion of each requirement. In the present system, students enrolled in any General Education course are required to give oral presentations and complete a specified number of written assignments. Additionally, all General Education courses must address problem solving, scientific method, critical interpretation, interpreting values, logical reasoning and reference and resource skills.

The dilemma facing the faculty in 1990 was that the Foundations 3, "Oral Communication" (hereafter referred to as F3) section of the program was comprised of 12 different courses (all under the title of Thinking, Reasoning and Expressing), taught in 12 departments under 12 sets of standards (see list below).

Content Criteria for a Course Proposal in Oral Communication (F3)

A course proposal in oral communication must contain and/or provide instruction in the following:

- Identification of the components of audience analysis and application of these to a speaking event.
- Introduction to, and identification of, persuasive techniques in speech.
- Introduction to the principles of group and interpersonal communication.
- Development of research skills to support topics chosen for speeches.
- Emphasis on the role of critical thinking or logic in the preparation of oral messages: analysis, evaluation, construction of the argument (synthesis), and valuing of the material and the speech.
- Instruction in presentational styles and techniques, including gestures, appearance, movements, other nonverbal factors as well as modes of delivery.
- Multiple opportunities to engage in oral communication before a group of peers for at least 3 to 5 minutes.
- Deliver at least one speech of persuasion before a group of peers.

- Engage in one written analysis of a contemporary speech.
- Engage in one exercise in group presentation.
- Provide at least on opportunity for students to evaluate peers.

All of the courses were developed to meet department-specific skills and lacked clear focus regarding the most obvious objective of oral communication education, which is to develop well trained, competent communicators (in the specific contexts of interpersonal, small group, and public speaking). Some examples of the twelve-class system included courses in astronomy, economics, law, philosophy, psychology and political science. Another factor that persuaded Western's faculty to focus on F3 was the realization that students who were potentially reticent regarding communication situations or in need of remedial, skill-intensive instruction were opting to take one of the F3 equivalent courses which for one reason or another, did not involve public speaking assignments.

In April 1993, the faculty proposed the current curriculum for F3 which had been cut to eight classes (and subsequently to five options). Further, the faculty decided that beginning in the Fall of 1997, F3 courses would focus only on oral communication contexts and limit classes to 25 students or less. Specifically, only two classes, Introduction to Speech Communication (CMHC 201) and Oral Communication (BA 204), a Business Administration section of oral communication, will be offered as options to fulfill the F3 requirement.

In addition to streamlining the F3 General Education requirement, the faculty also recognized the need to appoint a Director of Oral Communication Competence who is responsible for developing, implementing and supervising the administration of F3 courses, exe-

cuting an oral communication assessment plan to structure and feed these courses and serving as the chairperson for an Oral Communication Faculty Focus Group.

WESTERN'S FIVE-BRANCH ORAL COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

The anchor for the assessment and placement process at Western Carolina University is a five-branch oral communication curriculum. The branches are designed to identify and describe the levels of oral communication competence and apprehension of students and to meet corresponding academic needs. The branches are not hierarchical; rather they describe the dimensions of oral communication competence which are all different, yet grow from the same roots.

The branch system is designed to assist students across competence levels to fulfill the F3 requirement for general education. Recommendations for placement in one of the five branches are based on analyses of self-report measures, parent reports and observer assessments collected during freshman orientation. Specifically, recommendations are sent to students and advisors prior to registration for the spring semester in order to encourage appropriate class enrollment decisions. Descriptions of each branch of the program are described in this manuscript.

Branch One

Students who have been admitted to the Honors College or who self-report sufficient training and experience in oral communication, including the contexts of

interpersonal, small group, and public speaking, and who have been assessed as behaviorally competent by trained observers, are invited to take an Honors section of the course. Multiple sections of the Honors branch will be offered to accommodate students who are not reticent and those who have been identified as potentially reticent. Honors sections of the course have a maximum enrollment of 20 students.

Branch Two

Students who self-report significant levels of communication apprehension across communication contexts or in the context of public speaking alone, and who have been assessed as potentially reticent by trained observers, may opt to fulfill their oral communication general education requirement in a section designed for reticent communicators. It should be noted that this decision is optional; although assessment instruments and observations may identify a student as potentially reticent, the final decision to pursue specialized training rests with the individual. Students identified as potentially reticent are invited to meet with the instructors of reticent sections of the course for an assessment interview. This interview is the final screening method of assessment for the student; he or she may not enroll in the course without attending an interview.

Prior to registration each semester, letters are sent to the advisors of identified students, as well as the students themselves, explaining the reticent program. If a student is interested in the course, he or she is responsible for scheduling an assessment interview. Kelly, Phillips, & Keaten (1995) explained the reason for using the screening interview and offer a detailed description of the interview agenda (pp. 29-31). The approach of

using screening interviews requires students to discuss their communication difficulties so the instructor can identify skill deficiencies. As Kelly, Phillips, & Keaten (1995) noted, "the screening interview is a standardized procedure designed to identify individuals who have problems communicating across situations and individuals who have a severe fear of public speaking and speaking out in groups" (p. 31).

The Reticent Communicator Program has been developed to address specific problems in communication within academic, social and professional contexts (e.g., social communication skills, interacting with authority figures and class participation). In the Reticent Communicator Program, "students are expected to work with the instructor in order to prioritize individual goals to accomplish communication tasks which they have been reluctant to try and unable to do" (Kelly, Phillips, & Keaten, 1995, p. 265). It is important to note that the Reticent Communicator Program implemented at Western Carolina University has been developed using the original Pennsylvania State University Reticent Program (Phillips, 1991) as a guide.

Branch Three

Students who self-report the need for a Skill-Intensive Program and who have been identified by trained observers as potentially in need of basic skill-intensive instruction may opt to complete their oral communication general education requirement in these intensive, skill-based sections. These students will have indicated that they have received minimal training regarding oral communication skills. Further, these students will have been identified as not significantly reticent or apprehensive; rather, they are in need of non-reticent, skill-

specific instruction. Like the Reticent-Communicator Program, the final decision to pursue this type of specialized instruction is also left up to the student. Students who fit the criteria for this branch will be notified of which predesignated sections may best meet their needs. The primary difference between this branch of the program and standard sections is the text selected and specialized pedagogy. In the Skill Intensive course, the focus is on competence development at the most basic level.

Branch Four

Students who are not invited to enroll in an Honors section and those who have not been identified as potentially reticent or in need of Skill-Intensive instruction, will be asked to register for predesignated, general sections of approved General Education F3 courses.

Branch Five

After a student has completed his or her oral communication requirement, and receives two Oral Communication Condition (OCC) marks (indicated in conjunction with final grades) from two different instructors, he or she will be required to register for a remediation course, designed to revisit and reemphasize oral communication skills in the contexts of group process and public speaking.

Any faculty member who has determined that the student has failed to meet acceptable outcomes, may assign an OCC mark. Each undergraduate who receives two OCC marks prior to the semester in which they complete 110 hours required to pass the "Foundations of

Oral Communication" before they are eligible to graduate. The purpose of this course is to provide a follow-up, skill-intensive course for students identified as needing additional instruction in the cognitive and behavioral components of oral communication.

The Oral Communication Program at Western Carolina University supports the belief of the Wingspread Group (1993):

> Skills such as written and oral communication, critical analysis, interpersonal competence, the ability to obtain and use data and the capacity to make informed judgments are essential attributes of a liberal education. When they are accompanied by discipline-based knowledge, these skills can be learned. If they are to be learned, however, they must be taught and practiced, not merely absorbed as a result of unplanned academic experience. We believe that the modern world requires both knowledge and such skills and competencies. (p. 15)

It is our extended belief that skills are not always mastered following a student's first exposure to them. The remediation course is a stopgap, a follow-up opportunity to encourage the development of oral communication skills.

We recognize that instructors across the university may not feel confident regarding their decisions to recommend a student for remedial instruction. In order to support faculty members, Cutspec (1996) created a resource document designed to guide such decisions. This document conceptualizes and operationalizes basic oral communication skills. Additionally, an instrument to assess oral communication presentations is included to provide a tool that will allow consistency across the university curriculum. The assessment instrument circulated is a modified version of *The Competent Speaker*

Speech Evaluation Form (Morreale et al., 1993). This is the same instrument used in F3 courses to evaluate student presentations. One of our goals is to promote a strong core program coupled with consistent assessment techniques across the discipline.

THE ORAL COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT PROGRAM AT WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

Evolution

Phase One. The first phase of the Oral Communication Assessment program was implemented during the Fall of 1995, and involved only student self-report measures: the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA) and the Willingness to Communicate Scale (WTC) were disseminated during the fall semester in introductory-level English courses. The purpose of this initial assessment was to test for affective levels of communication apprehension in order to identify students who were potential candidates for a pilot section of the Reticent Program.

A total of 769 students completed both instruments, and the results indicated 130 students as potential candidates for the pilot reticent-communicator course (PRCA: M = 66.3., S.D. = 17.5, Cronbach's Alpha = .88; WTC: M = 69.2, S.D. = 17.4, Cronbach's Alpha = .90). The number of identified candidates (17 percent of those surveyed) is slightly below the normative mean (20 percent of individuals historically surveyed) regarding students who possess very high levels of trait-like communication apprehension (Richmond & McCroskey, 1995, p. 44).

However, due to faculty resource limitations, only the 70 students who scored highest on the PRCA and lowest on the WTC were invited to consider the pilot section of the reticent communicator course. Of these 70, 30 students participated in assessment interviews and 11 enrolled in the course. Fifteen of the remaining 19 students had scheduling conflicts and four were evaluated as inappropriate candidates for the course. Our initial assessment effort was successful; the first section of a course for reticent communicators was offered during the Spring of 1996.

It is interesting to note the options selected by the 40 students who did not opt to participate in interviews for the reticent course. Twenty of these students selected courses that are still acceptable options for fulfilling the F3 requirement. The classes the majority selected are large, lecture-type classes that do not require presentations. Fifteen of the original 40 students have yet to fulfill any option of F3 and five have completed standard sections of the basic communication course (three of these five students chose not to complete the public speaking requirements of the class and settled for a lower grade).

Phase Two. The second phase of the assessment plan, implemented during the 1996 summer orientation, included parental and observer assessments in addition to student self-report data. The utilization of parent-report data is an innovative approach to oral communication assessment. The reason underlying our decision to test this source of data is twofold. First, parents observe the behavior of their children across a wide variety of contexts and therefore may be able to achieve a balance in their assessment decisions. Second, we thought it would be interesting to see how parental data correlates with student self-report data and observer assessments. If the resulting correlations are significant, we will have

uncovered a novel source for data collection (a follow-up manuscript exploring the relevance of this data is in progress).

In addition to parental assessments, observer ratings have been incorporated into the program. According to *Criteria For The Assessment of Oral Communication* (The National Communication Association, 1993), methods of assessment should be consistent with the skills being assessed and performance skills must be assessed through actual performance. Backlund (1994) contended that the best "assessment tests are those that assess behavior directly" (p. 208). While self-report instruments are particularly useful in gathering attitudinal and affective information (Backlund, 1994) and parental assessments add a historical or longitudinal perspective, observer ratings or performance measures may be the strongest source of validity in a large-scale assessment program. While a lengthy discussion of the logistical and reliability concerns regarding observer ratings is beyond the scope of this manuscript, our program has been successful in recognizing and working to overcome these potential limitations. Additionally, the results of the first inclusion of these instruments indicates high reliability values (Parent's Assessment form, Cronbach's Alpha = .89; Observer's Assessments, Cronbach's Alpha = .98).

The primary purpose of both additional data collection methods was to increase the reliability and validity of the results discerned across the assessment process by triangulating the outcomes. This effort was successful in identifying individuals who are candidates for reticent instruction, basic, skill- intensive instruction, standard instruction or test out opportunities.

Phase Three. The final phase of the assessment plan was implemented in the Summer of 1997. Due to the strength of the results interpreted from the instru-

ments used in Phase Two, no changes were made. Following this assessment program, all of the existing F3 options were eliminated and all incoming first-year students are required to select a branch of one of the two basic communication courses to fulfill the oral communication general education requirement.

PURPOSE

Focusing on the needs of students, the purpose of oral communication assessment at Western Carolina University is to provide data that can be used for diagnosing communication strengths and weaknesses and for advising and placement purposes. The student makes course choices or receive other support or assistance based on the assessment results. When instruments are administered before and after a given course or experience, students can evaluate their development based on the dimension of competency assessed. Further, when observer ratings are incorporated (pre- and post- course or experience) the reliability of the assessment is enhanced. These data can be used for the following purposes (The National Communication Association, 1993).

First, the results of the assessment process can be used by instructors to revise both course content and pedagogy. Specifically, the differences in students' pre- and post- scores can provide direction for restructuring the learning experience on an ongoing basis.

Second, program administrators can use the triangulated results of the assessment measures in several ways. For example, we are in the process of tracking students who have been identified as being at risk for the purpose of addressing retention issues.

Finally, results of the assessment process can be used to evaluate and redirect academic courses and programs. These same results can be used to demonstrate the efficacy of such courses and programs (for a thorough description of criteria for the use of assessment results, see *The National Communication Association's Criteria for the Assessment of Oral Communication,* 1993).

LOGISTICAL COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM

With the development of an assessment and placement program of this magnitude, a focus on logistics is paramount. The decisions made by the Program Administrators involved the development of a manual used to guide participants and administrators (Cutspec and Abboud, 1996), the financial resources upon which such an initiative depends and the personnel required to turn the wheels of change.

The Assessment Manual

Development of the manual included publishing goals for the program which are succinct, clear and realistic. The second component of the document is a detailed explanation of the five branches of the oral communication program as it relates to students and the outcomes of their oral communication assessments. Developers of the manual also took the time to include guidelines for how the assessment process unfolds to the extent that they outlined in detail the internal functions of the small group discussion which serves as a filtering process for students who are identified as candidates for

each of the five branches of the program. Furthermore, the manual details the data collection procedures as well as the purpose for and logistics of parental participation during orientation.

This program prides itself on attention to detail and validity. Therefore, Cutspec and Abboud (1996 & 1997) offer specific descriptions of each assessment instrument as well as the reasons for selecting them. Further, the manual explains how each instrument is used and analyzed in order to aid in the identification of individual student needs.

Another feature included in the manual is that it provides normative guidelines for observers to use in making decisions about the students they observe; it defines all of the items on each survey instrument so that the material is more user friendly.

With so much data to enter, analyze and correlate, it is important that the manual offer a specific outline regarding how data will be interpreted. Each self-report measure, parent measure and observer measure is outlined regarding score ranges as well as parameters for extremes in responses. The manual includes scoring procedures for each instrument and what scores indicate regarding communication competencies. Sections on instrument scoring also include information on longitudinal research and established normative guidelines for means and standard deviations as they pertain to the overall history of the instruments as well as for data previously collected at Western Carolina University.

Financial Considerations

In any institution of higher learning, financial resources are always a concern. Primarily, this program utilizes existing personnel; those who participate do so

voluntarily. Additionally, no financial commitment from the General Education Program is required. Regarding expenses for project materials, since the university has printing facilities on campus, the manual and the survey instruments are produced at minimal cost. Financial resources to cover these expenses are provided by the Office for Student Assessment.

Personnel Resources

From the beginning of the assessment program, it has been unclear exactly how many people would be required to gather and process such an enormous amount of information. The program implemented during the Summer of 1996 included 17 observers, including four communication faculty members, six student interns, one student completing a special projects course, and six student volunteers. In 1997, the program utilized 20 observers, including nine student interns, six special project students, two graduate students from communication disorders, and three volunteers. Also included in different phases of the program were the Director of Assessment from the Office of Academic Affairs and her assistants, and a member of the university's computer center staff who wrote the programs for data input and analysis.

IMPLEMENTATION

During three sessions of orientation in the Summer of 1996 and four in the Summer of 1997, incoming students were assessed regarding their levels of oral communication competencies and degrees of com-

munication apprehension. These assessments are based on three methodological strategies.

The first of these strategies was comprised of three self-report measures including the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA), the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA) and an adapted version of the Conversational Skills Rating Scale (CSRS) (Spitzberg, 1995). The second method of data collection involved parents of incoming students who were asked to complete an adapted version of the CSRS to guide them in an assessment of their child's communication competencies. Finally, students were asked to participate in a small-group discussion during which the adapted version of the CSRS was used by trained observers to assess students' verbal and non-verbal communication behaviors.

It is important to note that the items remained consistent regarding the student, parent and observer versions of the CSRS in order to encourage reliability across the assessment instruments. Parents who attended one of the three orientation sessions were asked to fill out the CSRS (Parent Version) during a workshop designed for parents.

The self-report measures and the observer version of the CSRS were administered during the group discussion segment of the orientation program. Forty-five minutes were allowed for the students to fill out the self-reports and observers to complete the CSRS while small groups of students participated in discussions. Due to the initial success demonstrated, the time allotted has been extended to 75 minutes for this segment of the orientation. The topic used to guide the discussions was mailed to prospective students by the office of Academic Affairs several weeks before orientation, allowing the participants an opportunity to cognitively prepare for the exercise.

Groups are limited to approximately fifteen people for several reasons: the evaluators have to be able to manage completing the assessments; the students need an environment conducive to involvement; and the program has to allow everyone involved to have an opportunity to participate in the discussion.

Parents and students who complete the assessment surveys are asked to sign an informed-consent document, which authorizes the use of the data in longitudinal research studies. However, for academic evaluation purposes, the results of the findings were used for placement recommendations regardless of whether or not the participants signed the release forms.

Why go to such extremes? The answer is as basic as the question. According to the National Communication Association's report (1993), it is recommended that the "use of competence assessment as a basis for procedural decisions concerning an individual should, when feasible, be based on multiple sources of information, including direct evidence of actual communication performance, results of formal competence assessment, and measures of individual attitudes toward communication" (p. 2). All three of these contingencies are incorporated into the Oral Communication Assessment Program.

ANALYZING THE DATA

Upon completion of the survey instruments, data from the five documents were loaded into the university's mainframe computer system by the student interns and the special project students. One hundred fifteen characters of data were entered across the five instruments including the name and social security number of the student, a code to represent the sex of the

student and the student's age and name. Additionally, observer codes were included with the observer version of the CSRS. The instruments performed well according to the analyses run (Table 1).

Table 1
Instrument Performance 1996

Variable	Cases	Mean	Standard	Cronbach's Alpha Deviation
PRCA	1000	60.56	16.82	.82
PRPSA	1000	99.36	22.30	.60
CSRS (student)	991	48.97	8.44	.90
CSRS (parent)	472	52.46	7.94	.89
CSRS (observer)	728	39.62	15.32	.98

Instrument Performance 1997

Variable	Cases	Mean	Standard	Cronbach's Alpha Deviation
PRCA	1,160	59.71	16.33	.77
PRPSA	1,143	99.82	22.06	.71
CSRS (student)	1,124	49.38	8.8	.93
CSRS (parent)	445	51.15	8.98	.93
CSRS (observer)	1,548	40.79	13.83	.98

The PRCA

The PRCA is a survey instrument which permits computation of an overall apprehension assessment and

four sub-scores. The sub-scores are related to self-perceived communication apprehension in each of four contexts: group discussions, meetings, interpersonal conversations and public speaking. However, for our assessment purposes, analysis of the instrument was limited primarily to total assessment scores. Analyses run on the PRCA data included a total score for each student, a calculation of the sample mean and standard deviation, Cronbach's Alpha on the total measure and a selection of students by name and social security number who scored 1.5 standard deviations above and below the sample mean.

Richmond and McCroskey (1995) stated, "as with most personality-type measures, a PRCA-24 score can predict behavior only if a score is extremely high or low; such extreme scores suggest that behavior is influenced as much, if not more, by general feelings about communication than by a specific communication situation" (p. 44). Scores range from 24 to 120. Any score above 65 indicates a more generalized apprehension about communication than the average person. Scores above 80 indicate a very high level of trait-like Communication Apprehension (CA). Scores below 50 indicate a very low level of CA. Extreme scores are abnormal.

The PRPSA

On the PRPSA, the scores range from 34 to 170. For students with scores between 34 and 84, very few public speaking situations will produce anxiety. While scores between 85 and 92 indicate a moderately low level of anxiety about public speaking, some presentational contexts would be likely to arouse anxiety in students with such scores. Scores between 93 and 110 indicate moderate anxiety in most public speaking situations. However, a student in this category has the potential to

overcome the anxiety with training. Students scoring between 111 and 119 are suggestive of a moderately high level of public speaking anxiety. Students in this situation tend to avoid this context of communication.

Analysis of the PRPSA involved the same data analysis guidelines as the PRCA with one exception: the standard value selected for identification of apprehensive students was 1 standard deviation above and below the sample mean rather than 1.5. Typically, to identify specialized populations, the indicator of one standard deviation above or below the sample mean is used as a guide. However, due to faculty resource limitations, in four out of five primary instruments used during the Summer of 1996, we used the value of 1.5 standard deviations above or below the mean.

We recognize that this statistical guide will make the reported numbers of students needing and/or requesting specialized training conservative for this academic year. The only measure we used the value of one standard deviation is the PRPSA. The reason for this differentiated value is that this measure has not been repeatedly tested on large samples. In order to reduce the chances of our students "slipping through the cracks," we want to err on the side of caution.

The CSRS

The most unique component of the assessment program involves the development of a modified version of the CSRS, allowing evaluators to use data not only from students but also from parents and observers. The original 30-item form of the CSRS was developed "to provide a psychometrically sound instrument for assessing interpersonal skills in the context of conversation" (Spitzberg, 1995, p. 1). The original items have been collapsed in order to provide a reliable form that

can be used effectively when observing 15 students in a limited period of time. The resulting 14 items target verbal and nonverbal behaviors across the contexts of interpersonal and small group communication. Because students in the program were not asked to deliver a public speech, it would have been misleading to assign observer ratings to this context of communication behavior. Instead, the adapted measure is designed to guide assessments of operationalized verbal and nonverbal interpersonal and small group communication behaviors (two of the three communication contexts addressed in the F3 requirement).

As Spitzberg (1995) indicated, scoring the original instrument is generally straightforward. The same characteristic applies to the adapted version. The original and revised scales are "intrinsically oriented toward competence rather than incompetence," therefore, the first 14 items can simply be summed, producing a range from 14 to 70, with higher scores indicating increased levels of competence. The fifteenth item, which asks students, parents and observers to make predictive value judgments regarding an indication of the most beneficial program branch for each student, were triangulated with the results generated from the skill items and the results of the PRCA and the PRPSA.

Scores derived from the three versions of the CSRS included total scores for each version, calculation of the sample mean and standard deviation for each version, Cronbach's Alpha for the first 14 items of each version, a selection of students who fell 1.5 standard deviations above and below the sample mean of each version, a selection of students who indicated one on item 15, a selection of students who indicated two on item 15 and a selection of students who indicated four on item 15 (Table 2).

Table 2
CSRS (Student) Item 15: 1996

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Total
Missing	0	26	2.6	2.6	2.6
Remedial, Skill-Intensive Communication Skills Course	1	172	17.2	17.2	19.8
Reticent Communicator Course	2	242	24.2	24.2	44.0
Standard Course	3	486	48.6	48.6	92.6
Test-out Opportunity	4	74	7.4	7.4	100.0
Total		1000	100.0	100.0	

CSRS(Student) Item 15:1997

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Total
Missing	0	53	4.5	4.5	4.5
Skill-Intensity Communication Course	1	171	14.7	14.7	19.2
Reticent Communication	2	247	21.2	21.2	40.2
Standard Course	3	573	49.1	49.1	89.5
Honors Course	4	123	10.5	10.5	100.0
Total		1167	100.0	100.0	

INITIAL RESULTS

Out of 1011 students attending the three orientation sessions in 1996, data were collected on 1000. Specifically, 100% of the 1000 students completed the PRCA and the PRPSA; 99% completed the CSRS-Student Version; observers completed CSRS-Observer assessments on 73% of the students; and 47% of parents completed the CSRS-Parent Version. In the Summer of 1997, 1,274 students attended orientation sessions and 1,167 participated in the oral communication assessment. Specifically, 99.4% of the 1,167 students completed the PRCA, 97.9% completed the PRPSA: and 96.3% completed the CSRS-Student Version; observers completed CSRS-Observer assessments on 98% of the students; and 38% of parents completed the CSRS-Parent Version.

The number of assessment values we had to work with to identify branch recommendations was significantly large. We used eight primary assessment scores (the PRCA, the PRPSA, student, parent and observer versions of the CSRS, and the student, parent and observer values from item 15 of the CSRS). We also had the benefit of four secondary scores; the PRCA can be subscored to reveal levels of apprehension in the contexts of groups, meetings, conversation and public speaking. Therefore, in total, we worked with approximately 12,000 assessment scores, up to 12 for each of the 1000 students participating.

On the basis of triangulated results derived from the Oral Communication Assessment Program, the following numbers of recommendations for the specified branches of the basic communication course program were made to students and advisors for courses available in the Spring of 1997: recommendations for the

Reticent Program: 176; recommendations for the Basic, Skill-Intensive Program: 43 (this number may be misleading; students who have been assessed as skill deficient and reticent are recommended for the Reticent Program); recommendations for testing out: 19; and recommendations for the Standard Program: 726 (see Table 3).

Table 3
Branch Recommendations

Reticent	Skill-Incentive	Standard	Branch	Branch
Phase One 1995/1996	n= 77	N/A	n=685	N/A
Phase Two 1996/1997	n=176	n=43*	n=762	n=19
Phase Three 1997-1998	n=296	n=61	n=763	n=170**

* This number may be misleading; students who have been assessed as skill deficient *and* reticent are recommended for the Reticent Program.

** This number includes students who have been admitted to the Honors College, but have not been assessed as reticent. The potentially-reticent honors students are included under the Reticent Branch heading.

DISCUSSION

If education in general, and general education in particular, are going to be the focus for ongoing assessment programs, we must continue, or in some institutions begin, to prepare for the outcomes of such programs. The calls for assessment and revision are loud and clear; however, the responses have been muted. As

educators, our foci are to attract, encourage the retention of, educate and prepare students for what lies ahead. The learning process is complicated enough; when competence variables are added, it is easy to see how and why our discussions end up off-track.

However, as Chesebro, et al. (1992) contended, "all students, and particularly at-risk students, must be able to participate actively, orally and literately, in the quest for educational excellence" (p. 345). At-risk students encounter unique communication challenges. Many have unusually high rates of limited English proficiency, possess nonstandard language variations or dialects, live in environments that restrict options and opportunities for the development of oral communication skills, have experienced prior educational failures that affect their readiness to communicate orally and have been caught in a system that often denies at-risk "red flags" (Chesebro, et al., 1992; National Center for Education Statistics, 1990).

Western Carolina University has an Oral Communication Assessment, Curriculum and Support Programs that instruct faculty not only how to recognize communication weaknesses, but also how to look for and address them. Most institutions stress either a core-specific General Education course in Oral Communication or a program in Speaking Across the Curriculum. We are successfully accomplishing both, and more.

According to *The National Communication Association's Criteria for the Assessment of Oral Communication* (1993), "Assessment of oral communication should view competence in oral communication as a gestalt of several interaction dimensions. At a minimum, all assessments of oral communication should include an assessment of knowledge, skills and individuals' attitudes toward communication" (p. 3). Because our program stresses skills and attitudes, these two dimensions are

privileged. However, knowledge assessment techniques are increasingly incorporated into course goals. Assessment outcomes should stress planning instructional strategies to address student strengths and weaknesses and evaluating the effectiveness of instructional programs (p. 4). Both of these criteria are incorporated into our program through pre-test/post-test assessment, ongoing focus groups with students taking the course, and ongoing course revision meetings. The Branch Program is an example of our commitment to meeting the needs of our students.

Support is provided across the university through the efforts made at achieving consistency regarding assessment descriptions and a common public speaking assessment tool. Additionally, the Director of Oral Communication Competence meets with individual departments to stress the request for consistency and to provide clarification of disseminated information.

Our intention is to track the students assessed during the Summer of 1996 across four years. Additionally, because the academic year 1997-1998 is the first requiring all students to take one of the basic communication courses, these students will be assessed longitudinally as well. The longitudinal information will be invaluable in generating the ongoing programmatic assessments for which we are being held accountable (and rightly so). Assessment and innovative solutions based on the outcomes must be dually implemented; one without the other provides an unbalanced view of our ultimate goal: the pursuit of academic excellence.

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Analyzing C-SPAN in the Basic Communication Course

Jim Schnell

The basic communication course can be a forum for a variety of teaching strategies. Selection of said strategies is determined by variables such as topic, objectives, audience, and context. This article includes a methodology for studying presentations made by President George Bush during the Persian Gulf War as an example of how public speakers can be studied using the Purdue University Public Affairs Video Archives. Such methodology is beneficial in the classroom and with individual research efforts. The Purdue University Public Affairs (C-SPAN) Video Archives is the primary source used in this study because analysis focuses not only on literal statements but on nonverbal communication channels as well. The author sees the teaching and research functions of C-SPAN usage as mutually enriching.

To obtain videotapes, call the Public Affairs Video Archives at Purdue University (1-800-423-9630) and give them the name of the person being researched. They will provide an index and cost of all videotapes they have of that person. Each videotape has a brief description of the event. After reviewing the list, desired tapes can be ordered by calling the Public Affairs Video Archives. They will provide an order form and answer questions regarding the ordering process.

Written transcripts of speeches and presentations by President Bush provide literal meanings but provide no

insights regarding nonverbal communication cues. Usage of transcripts (as a singular source) has serious limitations because so much of our meanings are communicated through nonverbal channels. Thus, transcripts convey a limited portion of a speaker's overall meaning. Videotapes of the actual speeches provide verbal statements, nonverbal messages, and situational context. A transcript can describe the situational context but a videotape allows you to see and hear the situational context.

This research uses Persian Gulf War presentations delivered by President Bush between August 2, 1990 (the day Iraq invaded Kuwait) and January 16, 1991 (when the air war against Iraq began). Bush was selected for analysis because, as President, he was a major statesman. The Persian Gulf War time period was selected because it is a definite time period that includes numerous presentations by Bush on a particular subject. Every presentation by Bush, available from the C-SPAN tape index for the aforementioned period, was used in this study. Contexts of delivery include news conferences, speeches, news briefings, and White House events. Using all of the Bush presentation tapes available from the C-SPAN index provides an appropriate way to limit/define the tape sample studied.

The study of the Bush videotaped presentations allows analysis of the President's rhetoric in relation to events and intentions in the Persian Gulf. Analysis of literal verbal statements provides insights regarding labeling (usage of action verbs) and the use of symbols. This is exemplified by Bush describing the Iraq troop movement into Kuwait as an "invasion" and "unchecked aggression." Analysis of nonverbal communication provides insights regarding the role of vocalics & paralanguage cues (pitch, rate, tone, and volume), occulesics (eye behavior), and kinesics (gesturing). Analysis of the

verbal statements and nonverbal messages is enhanced through appreciation of situational contexts the statements and messages are communicated within. For instance, when Bush spoke solely to a television audience from the oval office it was a different context than when he addressed a joint session of Congress.

Study of these areas (verbal statements, nonverbal communication and situational contexts) can be done using the chart provided below.

STUDENT SPEECH ANALYSIS FORM

Tape Date: _____ Topics: _____
Length: _____
Type of Speech: _____
Title of Speech: _____
Location of Speech: _____

Use the following scale in responding to each of the following statements:

SD = strongly disagree
D = disagree
N = neutral
A = agree
SA = strongly agree

LOGOS (use of reasoning): Provide a brief summary of main points and describe how these main points are substantiated.

The speaker effectively clarified main points of the position taken and provides appropriate substantiation of these main points.

SD	D	N	A	SA
1	2	3	4	5

ETHOS (character of speaker): Provide a brief summary of main factors that comprise speaker's character (i.e. trustworthiness, expertness, goodwill & charisma) and how this character is conveyed.

The speaker effectively conveys positive character (i.e., trustworthiness, expertness, goodwill, and charisma).

SD	D	N	A	SA
1	2	3	4	5

PATHOS (stimulation of emotions): Provide a brief summary of speaker's stimulation of audience emotions (i.e. anger, friendship, fear, shame and/or pity) and how this stimulation is achieved.

The speaker effectively stimulates audience emotions (i.e. anger, friendship, fear, shame and pity).

SD	D	N	A	SA
1	2	3	4	5

This chart uses the Aristotelian perspectives of logos, ethos, and pathos as a framework for interpreting Bush's reasoning, character, and emotional appeal. Bush's reasoning, character, and emotional appeal are conveyed through his verbal statements, nonverbal communication, and situational contexts. Using this framework benefits students because, if they are not familiar with logos, ethos and pathos, this approach will orient them to the concepts and their application. If they are familiar with these concepts then this approach will allow them to sharpen that understanding.

The eleven tapes studied in the project can be analyzed using the form above. Review of each tape begins by noting the tape date, title, length, topic, type of presentation, and location of presentation. This information helps define the situational context of the presentation. It is easily obtained from the tape description provided on each cassette (except for the topic, which is best ascertained after viewing the tape).

STUDENT REVIEW

Ideally, each tape should be viewed three times by students. This allows specific focus on logos, ethos, and pathos. The first viewing is for analysis of logos (use of reasoning). The form instructs the student to provide a brief summary of main points and describe how these main points are substantiated. The student also responds to the statement "The speaker effectively clarifies main points of the position taken and provides appropriate substantiation for these main points."

The second viewing is for analysis of ethos (character of the speaker). The chart instructs the student to provide a brief summary of main factors that comprise the speaker's character (i.e. trustworthiness, expert-

ness, goodwill, charisma, etc.) and how this character is conveyed. The student also responds to the statement, "The speaker effectively conveys positive character."

The third viewing is for analysis of pathos (stimulation of emotions). The form instructs the student to provide a brief summary of the speaker's stimulation of audience emotions (i.e. anger, friendship, fear, shame, and/or pity) and how this stimulation is achieved. The student also responds to a statement, "The speaker effectively stimulates audience emotions."

Analysis of the presentations using this form provides a means by which reviewers can formulate concise interpretations. Without such a framework for interpretation, reviewers can too easily generalize their observations if they don't have specific phenomena they're watching for. Use of the Likert Scale provides a foundation for classroom discussion of the presentations (i.e., presentations can be numerically scored regarding speaker effectiveness in these three areas).

Students can write additional comments on the back of one of the pages of the form. Occasionally the reviewer may have an observation that does not directly relate to logos, ethos, or pathos that he or she feels is relevant to the evaluation process. For instance, if the speaker is wearing uncommon clothing for the speaking situation, the reviewer (student) may want to note that on the form.

FINDINGS

The eleven presentations used in this study are listed in the references section. Each tape has been analyzed by the author using the aforementioned form. This type of analysis, based on author interpretation, is intended to be a pilot study. A more thorough analysis

can obviously be achieved by using the survey with students and quantifying their observations (using the Likert Scale numerical ordering). Thus, consistencies in the data can be used to build findings and conclusions.

Findings, based on verbal statements, nonverbal communication, and situational contexts, illustrate the benefit of using videotapes of presentations rather than written transcripts, in that nonverbal communication and situational contexts cannot be evaluated using written transcripts. It is the author's contention that such nonverbal communication and situational contexts impact viewer impression formation.

An example of such a finding is located in the tape, "Situation in the Persian Gulf" (1990). Review of the tape indicates Bush consistently pronounces Saddam Hussain in a manner different than journalists, spokespersons, and those interviewed. This unique pronunciation is of the name "Saddam." Bush's unique pronunciation of Saddam rhymes with "Adam". The more common pronunciation of Saddam can be described as "Sawdawm" (with emphasis on the first syllable). The pronunciation of Saddam used by Bush is incorrect and translates to "shoe-shine boy." The more common translation of Saddam is correct and translates to "highly revered one." This usage exemplifies a unique form of (what could be referred to as a) "psychological operation."

A primary finding from the videotape analysis deals with the importance of what type of presentation Bush is making. These types, or contexts, of delivery include news conferences, speeches, news briefings, and White House events. The more control Bush has over the environment, and the more prepared he is with his message, correlates with his ability to convey his desired meaning. For instance, he is most effective in an oval office speech, where he has a prepared text and no live audi-

ence to contend with, than he is in a news conference, where he is responding to questions spontaneously.

The tape, "Bush and Thatcher on Invasion of Kuwait" (1990), is a news conference where Bush presents a prepared statement. Review of the videotape indicates Bush's most notable factor, regarding character, is his expert image. His consistency with his position conveys an image of being knowledgeable and informed. The tape, "U.S.-Persian Gulf Resolutions" (1991), in contrast, is a news conference where Bush presents a prepared statement and responds to questions. In such a situation he has less control of his and others' behaviors, as manifested in the questions asked and the aggressiveness with which they are asked. Review of the videotape indicates Bush appeared to be mildly dishevelled (i.e. his hair was greasy and uncombed). This implies his hands-on approach with the Persian Gulf situation (making his normal well-kept appearance less of a priority).

Bush is most polished and "presidential" in a speech from the White House Oval Office ("Troop Deployment," 1990). Review of the tape finds Bush speaks from the Oval Office (which enhances his credibility) and his family photos provide a backdrop (which enhances his humanitarian appeal). He is almost "fatherly" (when he provides a benevolently animated explanation for U.S. actions). The effect of environment is a factor in "Events in the Persian Gulf" (1990). This video is a Bush news conference from his vacation home in Kennebunkport, Maine. He speaks from his vacation home, outside, and wearing a blue blazer over a sport shirt. He seems well rested, comfortable, well informed (regarding his initial statement) and steadfast. The environment, and his familiarity with it, enhances his credibility.

The tape, "Presidential Address on Persian Gulf" (1990), is Bush's speech to a joint session of Congress.

This presentation was designed to show a united American front, thus Bush could count on audience support from members of the House and Senate. Bush delivered a well polished speech. It was clear, concise, and delivered with a good sense of timing. A good example of statesman oratory (effective pauses and moderately animated). His logic was substantiated, his emotional appeals were built upon widely held beliefs of his audience, and his credibility was pronounced given he was the President addressing a joint session of Congress. This speech is a high point regarding Bush's ability to stimulate emotion. His speech was interrupted roughly 24 times with applause.

The benefit of videotape analysis, over transcript analysis, is also apparent on the tape, "Geneva Meeting on Persian Gulf Crisis" (1991). Review of the tape indicates Bush inspires confidence and his leadership role is intact (he is flanked by U.S. and United Nations flags). One gets the feeling there is little posturing. Bush seems genuinely frustrated; especially as conveyed in his tone of voice. Thus, the aforementioned apparent preference for videotape analysis over transcript analysis is illustrated via the backdrop within which he speaks and his resolute tone of voice.

There are inherent weaknesses with the proposed model of analysis. Findings will be based on subjective interpretations of the videotaped presentations. When such interpretations differ in the classroom, this can be a foundation for classroom discussion regarding why interpretations differ. The subjective nature of this kind of inquiry is readily acknowledged. However, use of a subjective instrument does not negate or affirm the usefulness of the instrument. It merely substantiates that findings must be considered in light of the method used to arrive at the findings. The exemplification of this issue in the classroom benefits student understanding.

CONCLUSION

This study of President Bush's speeches on the Persian Gulf exemplifies how other public speakers can be analyzed. Student understanding can be benefited in a variety of courses in communication, including mass media, persuasion, intercultural communication, rhetoric, interpersonal communication, and public speaking. For instance, Bush's presentations are conveyed by the media, are often persuasive or informative, involve expression of meanings to culturally diverse audiences, and employ rhetorical strategies.

The goal of this article has been to describe methodology for studying presentations made by President George Bush during the Persian Gulf War. The study of Bush exemplifies how other public speakers might be analyzed using the Purdue University Public Affairs Video Archives. The strengths of the methodology described are use of videotape provides considerably more context than written transcripts and videotape can be used effectively in the classroom. As a pilot study this article illustrates the strengths and weaknesses of using packaged videotaped speeches as a teaching tool in the basic communication course.

The evolving information age offers teachers a variety of new tools for conveying class material. Examination of such tools is based on the belief we should clearly seek to acknowledge strengths and weaknesses of each innovation and work to capitalize on the strengths. The use of these kinds of videotapes helps students learn about the three kinds of proof and supporting materials that can be used in basic course assignments.

VIDEOS ORGANIZED CHRONOLOGICALLY

"Bush and Thatcher on Invasion of Kuwait," C-SPAN Public Affairs Video Archives. August 2, 1990 (ID 13394).

"Reaction to Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait," C-SPAN Public Affairs Video Archives. August 2, 1990 (ID 13395).

"Situation in Persian Gulf," C-SPAN Public Affairs Video Archives. August 8, 1990 (ID 13458).

"Troop Deployment," C-SPAN Public Affairs Video Archives. August 8, 1990 (ID 13455).

"Events in the Persian Gulf," C-SPAN Public Affairs Video Archives. August 27, 1990 (ID 13703).

"Events in the Persian Gulf," C-SPAN Public Affairs Video Archives. August 28, 1990 (ID 13717).

"Presidential Address on Persian Gulf," C-SPAN Public Affairs Video Archives. September 11, 1990 (ID 13945).

"Geneva Meeting on Persian Gulf Crisis," C-SPAN Public Affairs Video Archives. January 9, 1991 (ID 15641).

"U.S. Persian Gulf Resolutions," C-SPAN Public Affairs Video Archives. January 12, 1991 (ID 15678).

"Persian Gulf War: Fitzwater Announcement," C-SPAN Public Affairs Video Archives. January 16, 1991 (ID 15762).

"Presidential Address: Persian Gulf Air War Begins," C-SPAN Public Affairs Video Archives. January 16, 1991 (ID 15723).

An Idea For Restructuring the Basic Communication Course: A "Time as Needed" Approach[1]

Donald D. Yoder

The basic course in communication is defined as the introductory first course that college students take in communication. It is most often a skills based course and frequently fulfills a university or college general education requirement. The hybrid communication course typically covers a variety of skills in a sampling of communication contexts, e.g., public speaking, group communication, interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, and interviewing.

CHALLENGES

Recent challenges to the basic course in communication suggest that innovations are needed to change the course at is currently delivered. Many schools and departments are requesting that the basic course be adapted to its majors. They contend that the course does not meet the specific needs of its majors or that the course is difficult to schedule given the increasing curricular demands within the major. In addition, revisions of General Education structures and foci may leave skill development isolated from other requirements.

[1] This article is a revision of a paper presented during the National Communication Association Convention, Chicago, 1997.

A second challenge to the basic course is the definition of the term "basic" which implies students learn "basic skills." In this context, the term "basic" has several interpretations. Some people define basic skills as remedial for unprepared entering students. Others conceptualize basic skills as those skills required to succeed in other college classes. Still others define basic skills as those assumed to be necessary for any college graduate to succeed in professional/career contexts.

A third challenge arises as many colleges and universities put increasing pressure to develop innovative course delivery methods which can save operating costs and increase efficiency. The traditional educational model based on a specified number of hours of classroom "seat time" is inefficient and costly. Basic courses face the dilemma between the need to increase the number of students per class for cost savings and the contradictory need to provide personal help and individual performance feedback and multiple opportunities for skill development.

RESTRUCTURING THE HYBRID COURSE

This article proposes a restructuring of the hybrid basic communication course. The suggested structure defines Basic Skills as "minimum skills required by a college graduate." It also assumes that these basic skills will be further developed in upper level courses, especially those in the student's major. Communication skills are contextually and transactionally determined, i.e., skill acquisition and performance require the interaction of others. In addition, communication competence involves the ability to choose an appropriate communicative act from a number of communication options. Thus, the development of communication skills also re-

quires a firm conceptual foundation as to their purpose and function in human interaction such that students can make informed decisions concerning their appropriateness in a given context. Therefore, the course assumes that skills cannot be learned by rote, nor can they be performed in isolation.

These assumptions mitigate the use of computer simulations or other non-human interactive technology as the sole means of teaching and evaluating communication skills. Delivery of the course must necessarily require "seat time" in an interactive classroom setting.

The necessity for communication skills in all professions and careers is well documented. These skills must be at a higher level of proficiency and sophistication than can be taught in high school classes. Typically, communication is taught in high school at the Sophomore level, often by non-communication professional, and almost universally as a public speaking class. The sophistication of the instruction, the scope of skills covered, the level of skills proficiency, and the maturity of the student are far below what are required by any career or profession, and often far below what is required in the college classroom. A university-educated person must have a sophisticated understanding of communication processes and the development of adult level communication skills that can apply to a variety of contexts.

This position assumes that students must see a connection between the classroom instruction and their potential future professions/careers. It also assumes that students have the maturity and experience to apply the skills to both their academic professional training and their work-related contexts. Instructors must also be able to apply the course material and skills to the non-classroom environment and to require a high level of competency. Many instructors and textbooks attempt to do this with promises that students will see the applica-

tion in their senior level course presentations or in their careers or in their marriages. Students often have difficulty appreciating the need for learning communication skills which are useful sometime in the distant future from their point of view. Indeed, when they do need the skills several semesters later, they have often forgotten what they were taught in the basic course.

Most students enroll in the basic communication course during their first year in college. Their immediate past experience is their high school relationships and their family environment. Many students spend their entire first year taking general education courses and do not take courses in their major until their sophomore or junior years. Such a structure mitigates the application of the course material to professional/career situations or to the problems encountered as students mature.

A difficulty in teaching students communication skills applicable to their careers and majors, therefore, is that many first year students do not have the experience or maturity to appreciate or apply the material to relevant contexts. For example, it is difficult to teach employment interviewing when students have no meaningful material to put on a resume and have no conception of the career that may await them. Similarly, public speaking skills and group communication skills become more meaningful when they can apply them directly to the assignments in their major courses.

A RESPONSIVE BASIC COMMUNICATION COURSE

Therefore, this paper advocates a "time when needed" paradigm in which students take different units of the hybrid communication course when it has the

most meaning to their education and their personal/professional development. Each unit of the course would be taken in succeeding semesters or years. For example, they might enroll in the public speaking course in their sophomore year to prepare them for class presentations in major courses. Similarly, they might take the group communication unit in their junior year as they engage in group and team projects in other courses. The student may take the interpersonal and interviewing unit when they are seniors so they can prepare for the employment interviews they will face upon graduation. Each college, school, or department might recommend a different sequence based on the needs of their specific students and programs. The students' chances of developing communication competence are enhanced when they can continue to practice the skills taught in the basic course in immediate applications to courses in their major.

To meet the assumptions of the "time when needed" approach, the course could be redesigned to offer the skills in three 1-credit hour units. Three units (courses) could be designed, each covering one-third of the course material.

Course 1 — Public Speaking. This unit (course) would include the necessary skills for developing and performing a speech to inform and a speech to persuade including listening, organization, supporting materials, reasoning and critical thinking, visual aids, and delivery. Assignments: two 5-7 minute speeches, one exam.

Course 2 — Group Decision Making. This Unit (course) incorporates the necessary skills for leading and participating in group decision making including listening, group processes, group roles, leadership,

power, conflict management, and decision making processes. Assignments: one group project (8 groups of five students) requiring a written paper and a class presentation; one exam.

Course 3 — Interviewing and Interpersonal Communication. This unit (course) includes the necessary skills for managing interpersonal relationships and employment interviewing including person perception, self image, listening, impression management, developing interview questions and guides, EEOC guidelines, resume writing, and interviewing strategies. Assignments: professional resume, 5-7 minute employment interview, one exam.

Each course would be taught in a schedule equaling one-third of the term, e.g., for a fifteen week semester, each course would be given in a five week schedule. This arrangement should make it possible to schedule the basic course with little impact on the scheduling demands of other departments, schools, or majors. In addition, the students would have ten weeks in which they would not attend the course.

These courses would be taken in a sequence that best fit the needs of the student, e.g., sophomores would take Course 1; Juniors would take Course 2; Seniors would take Course 3. Students could opt to take more than one course per term, giving maximum scheduling flexibility. The revision of the course as a series of one-credit courses, delivers essentially the same course to the same number of students with each course having the same number of contact hours. It makes maximum use of class time by allowing different numbers of student enrollment in each unit.

Table 1
Course Structure

Current Structure to deliver course to 720 students per semester:

One 15-week 3-credit course
- 2250 minutes of "seat time" per course per term
- 30 sections of 24 students each
- 30 classrooms
- 30 instructors @$2000 = $60,000

Proposed Structure:

Three 5-week 1-credit courses (three rotations per term)
- MWF 10 sections Public Speaking
- MWF 8 sections Interpersonal
- TTH 6 sections Group
- 750 minutes "seat time" per course per 5 week term
- 72 sections of 1 credit hour courses per term
  - 30 sections of Course 1— (24 per section) — 10 sections each five-week term
  - 18 sections of Course 2 — (40 per section) — 6 sections each five-week term
  - 24 sections of Course 3 — (30 per section) — 8 sections each five-week term
- 24 classrooms per 5-week term (repeated each 5 weeks)
- 24 instructors per 5-week term @666.67 = $16000.00 (note: each instructor teaches 3 1-hr courses per semester @ $2000 per 15 week term; $48000.00 per term)

Savings per semester:
- 6 classrooms
- 6 instructors
- $12000 salaries

Thus, the total number of sections required is reduced by approximately 20% per year providing savings in personnel costs and overhead. For a program offering 60 sections/year at an average cost of $2000 per instructor in salary and benefits and operating expenses, this amounts to a $24000 savings per year. It also permits maximum scheduling flexibility for the students

Requirements

Specific requirements must be met for this structure to be effective. First, providing waiver exams for each 1-credit course would be costly and administratively cumbersome. Second, because of the short time period and limited number of class meetings, it would be inappropriate for students to add the course late or to oversubscribe the course. However, since each course is repeated within the same semester, students have a greater flexibility in adding courses at a later time. Third, there would be no time for late or make up assignments.

Disadvantages

The proposed structure would require new texts to be written based on a modular approach. There would be increased work in ordering and handling course materials and in creating syllabi and other course materials. The staffing and training of instructors and scheduling procedures would need to be modified to accommodate the more complex structure. The increased number of students per teacher per term might decrease student-teacher interaction and rapport. The modular course structure also increases the complexity of grade

handling since there will be three sets of grades submitted (one set every five weeks). Potentially, there may be some loss of content from the current course and a loss of continuity and integration of course material. The structure may also make it easier for academic units to require only some of the 1 credit courses, e.g., engineering might require only the public speaking course, thus resulting in an overall loss of student credit hours.

Advantages

Pedagogically, the modular "time when needed" structure increases focus on the skills required by one specific context at a time. Since each course is focused, there could be additional innovation in teaching strategies, e.g., adjoining rooms with multimedia technology could allow team teaching, shared resources, and interaction among sections. Most importantly, under the assumptions of "time when needed" structuring, students would be taking the course when they are more mature and when course content is more germane, i.e., employment interviewing would be studied during the junior or senior year.

Operational advantages include the savings in personnel and operating costs (See Table 1). The structure decreases the number of rooms required to deliver the course, while fewer sections decreases the need to schedule early and late classes. Students may find it easier to schedule the course with the other courses required in their major programs, i.e., it may be easier to find time for a 1-hour course for five weeks than a 3 hour course for 15 weeks. Being in class for only 5 weeks each term frees ten weeks per term for students. A student who becomes ill or misses assignments can more easily reregister for the course during another five

week session rather than taking an incomplete or repeating an entire 3-credit course for missing one unit. Assessment of course efficacy and student communication competency could be more focused on specific skills and outcomes.

The "time when needed" modular structure meets the assumptions of teaching communication skills at a level applicable to the major and to career development. It also capitalizes on the need to teach skills to students when they are ready to learn, i.e., when they can readily apply the skills in other contexts. The innovation in structure is more complex, yet it saves personnel and operating costs without sacrificing human interaction necessary for communication skills development.

Author Identifications

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Call for Submissions

The Editor and the Basic Course Commission of the National Communication Association invite submissions to the considered for publication in the *Basic Communication Course Annual*. The Annual is published by American Press (Boston, MA) and is distributed nationally to scholars and educators in the basic communication course. Manuscripts are accepted for review throughout the year for publication consideration. However, the deadline for *Basic Communication Course Annual 12* is April 1, 1999. Manuscripts received after this date will be considered for the next volume of the Annual.

Manuscripts exploring significant issues for the basic course, research in the basic course, instructional practices, graduate assistant training, classroom teaching tips, or the status, role, and future of the basic communication course are invited. It is incumbent on contributors to establish a position on how the work they seek to have published advances knowledge in the area of the basic communication course. Only the very best manuscripts received are published. Quality is determined solely by the qualified Editorial Board and the Editor. Manuscripts submitted should not be under consideration for other journals or have appeared in any published form. The decision of by the Editor regarding publication of any manuscript is final.

All manuscripts must conform to latest edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Asso-

ciation or they will be returned to the author(s). If an author needs assistance with the proper style please refer to the Manual or, an online resource for using APA publication style, <www.apa.org/journals/webref.html>

Each submission must be accompanied by a 100- to 150-word abstract of the manuscript and a 50- to 75-word author identification paragraph on each author following the format of the Annual. Manuscripts, in general, should not exceed 30 pages or approximately 9,000 words (including references, notes, tables, and figures).

Manuscripts that do not explore issues or pedagogy surrounding the basic communication course or that are seriously flawed will be returned by the Editor. Manuscripts that are improperly prepared or suffer from substantial stylistic deficiencies will also be returned. Submissions deemed acceptable for publication consideration in the Annual will be sent for blind review to three members of the Editorial Board. Be sure all references to the author and institutional affiliation are removed from the text of the manuscript and the list of references. A separate title page should include: (1) a title and identification of the author(s), (2) professional title(s), address(es), telephone number(s), and electronic-mail address(es) (if available), and (3) any data concerning the manuscript's history. The history should include any previous public presentation or publication of any part of the data or portions of the manuscript, and, if the manuscript is drawn from a thesis or dissertation, the advisor's name.

Manuscripts should be double-spaced throughout, including references and notes. Do not use right justification. Manuscripts should use tables only when they are the most efficient mode of presenting data. Avoid tables that duplicate material in the text or that present information most readers do not require.

Authors should submit four (4) copies of manuscripts and retain the original. Manuscripts, abstracts, and author identification paragraphs should be sent to:

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Questions about the Annual or a potential submission may be directed to the Editor by phone at 33042-3633 or via e-mail:

lwhugenb@cc.ysu.edu.

Editorial Philosophy

The Basic Communication Course Annual examines current introductory communication course research and pedagogical issues. Manuscripts may be experimental, theoretical, or applied in nature. Submissions regarding basic communication instruction at all educational levels are considered.

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